

NELSON IN LOVE
GRACA MACHEL: MY
LIFE WITH MANDELA

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JOHN WALSH
CONFESSIONS OF
AN IDIOT PRIEST

MAGAZINE



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THE INDEPENDENT

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America mourns, as family war begins over the Sinatra millions



Frank Sinatra: Wanted his death marked extravagantly

By David Usborne
and Andrew Buncombe

EVEN as all of America stopped to mourn the death of Frank Sinatra, widely considered to be the most important and beloved entertainer of the century, a battle appeared to be brewing between his widow and three children over his \$200m (£120m) estate.

Sinatra, aged 82, died of a heart attack on Thursday night, at the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles after months of failing health. It is

understood a private funeral will be held next week in Palm Springs, California, after a memorial service this weekend in Beverly Hills.

The entire United States indulged in an orgy of nostalgia on the airwaves for the man they called "Ol' Blue Eyes". The Empire State Building in New York is likely to be bathed in blue light and lights on The Strip in Las Vegas dimmed as a mark of respect.

Sinatra is said to have once told his children he wanted his death to be marked extra-

ganly. "I want fireworks lighting the sky, all the former presidents in attendance and I want Luciano Pavarotti singing 'Ave Maria'".

While his fourth wife, Barbara, and her three Sinatra step-children - Frank Jr, Tina and Nancy - were together at his bedside when he died, there were fears last night that feuds over the inheritance that have flared in recent years would quickly reignite.

One source close to the family said last night: "There has been an awful lot of fighting

Inside

The only man in America who could do whatever he wanted, pages 4 and 5
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record royalties, personal art collections and enterprises in property, music publishing and even a beer wholesaler, that is conservatively valued at \$200m. Arguments may also resurface over control of the company he formed to license his likeness and name. Called Sheffield Enterprises, it is headed by the 49-year-old Tina.

Among the many recent clashes, one was sparked by Barbara's decision to allow the Korbel California champagne company to reproduce some of Sinatra's paintings on its bottles.

There have also been "singing" porcelain souvenir plates (embossed with a computer chip carrying the singer's voice) and other products said to be of questionable taste.

There was fury from the children in 1996 when Barbara forged ahead with a televised salute to Sinatra on his 80th birthday. When Barbara threw a 20th anniversary party for her husband in the same year, the children were all so-shows.

The fiercest of the fights in the past, and potentially in the months ahead, centre on the

control of Sinatra's recordings. While the children were given control by the singer of his Reprise Records catalogue, spanning 1960 to 1988, Barbara has recently headed efforts to reissue his earlier songs.

For those hoping that in grief, the grievances can be buried, they might note that Barbara was recently quoted as telling a friend at the height of the Korbel champagne row: "Why should I have any loyalty to Frank's ungrateful kids? If they want a fight they're going to get it."

Ulster faces 'No' vote catastrophe

By Kim Sengupta, David McElrick and Colin Brown

AN INCREASING Unionist swing towards a "no" vote is holding out the possibility of a disastrous result in next week's referendum on the Northern Ireland peace agreement.

A new opinion poll shows that 45 per cent of Unionists intend to vote no, while only 35 per cent are preparing to vote yes. With the count less than a week away, a further 20 per cent are undecided on whether to back the accord.

Even the declaration of an "unequivocal ceasefire" by the Loyalist Volunteer Force, the renegade grouping which has killed almost a dozen Catholics this year, did little to dispel the gloom in official circles about the referendum prospects.

The LVF said the move, announced by armed and masked men in Portadown, Co Armagh, was to encourage a no vote in the referendum. The suspicion is, however, that it may have been prompted not by subtle political calculations but because the two dozen LVF prisoners are anxious to benefit from the early releases only available to inmates whose organisations have ceased fire.

Unless there is a huge swing in the opposite direction, the Irish Times opinion poll figures indicate an indecisive result in Friday's vote. While they point to a yes majority in the northern poll, a majority of Protestants vote against, it would rob the vote of much of its political authority and leave it vulner-

able to attack from the Reverend Ian Paisley and his anti-agreement camp.

Jeffrey Donaldson, one of David Trimble's Unionist MPs, delivered another blow to the Government by announcing that despite extensive contact with Tony Blair he is unable to support the agreement.

Mr Blair is planning a third visit to Northern Ireland next week in a final effort to raise support among the wavering Unionists for a "yes" vote.

Mr Blair's decision to add a third tour of the province on the eve of Thursday's poll underlines the anxieties at Downing Street over the failure to win over Unionists who have yet to decide how to vote.

The reason cited by most of those opposing the agreement was their objection to the early release of paramilitary prisoners. Their anxieties were reinforced by the presence at a Belfast rally of convicted Milltown Cemetery murderer Michael Stone. Indeed, embarrassingly for the Government, Stone's appearance at Ulster Hall coincided and overshadowed the Prime Minister's second visit to Belfast which was meant to give a fillip to the yes vote.

Yesterday, Mr Blair spoke of public "revulsion" at the appearance of Stone, who was on temporary leave from prison whilst serving a life sentence for six murders and four attempted murders. A Downing Street spokesman agreed that it looked "very, very bad" and its timing, on the same evening as the Prime Minister's visit, was

"unfortunate to say the least".

While the feeling of pessimism about the success of the accord grew in Ulster it was announced that Tony Blair and the United States president Bill Clinton, in Britain for the G8 Summit of world leaders, were to make a united effort to bolster the peace process. The two men are expected to make an appeal for peace tomorrow.

Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, and William Hague, the Tory leader, will also make visits to the Province to lend their support to the "yes" campaign, in spite of reservations by leading Tories about the release of prisoners and arrangements for disarming the terrorists.

Sinn Fein warned that the Government's perceived attempts to allay the fears of Unionists by talking tough on de-commissioning and the release of prisoners could lead it into political quicksand. Launching its "yes" campaign, chairperson Mitchell McLaughlin said the Government could be trapped by its own rhetoric and "Tony Blair can not allow this to happen". However Sinn Fein did not believe that the Government was moving the goalposts.

The "no" campaigners were increasingly in ebullient mood. A senior official of Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party claimed that private soundings showed that those as yet undecided were increasingly drifting into the no camp. He added: "The bubble burst, the yes campaign was built on froth and it is dissolving into nothing."



Newcastle United fans leaving the city's central station yesterday. Their team play Arsenal in today's FA Cup final at Wembley Photograph: Raoul Dizon

Church leaders are attacked for putting Cup Final before poverty

By Paul Vallyah

THE Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal Basil Hume are today condemned for deciding to attend the FA Cup Final rather than join tens of thousands of church activists expected in Birmingham to protest over Third World debt at the G8 summit.

The attendance at Wembley by the Arsenal fan Dr George Carey, and Newcastle supporter Cardinal Hume, is criticised by the editor of the *Church Times* as a "missed opportunity to show the country what real sacrifice means". The two were invited but "pleaded a prior engagement", a spokesman

said. Writing today in *The Independent*, Paul Handley says that with half the world in physical peril and the other half in peril spiritually, "spending a dull afternoon in Birmingham is a small price to pay".

Church spokesmen denied that the prelates had their priorities wrong. "Dr Carey has given two major speeches on debt and has just come back from Uganda where debt was at the top of the agenda," said a spokesman for Lambeth Palace.

Cardinal Hume's office said that he had "taken a very active interest in the question of debt over several years. He organised a seminar in 1996 attended by the director of the

International Monetary Fund; and he attended a meeting with the Chancellor in December... He personally contacted the presidents of the Catholic Bishops' Conferences of all the G7 countries and asked them to make special appeals to their governments and he went specially to Birmingham today to pray and speak about debt..."

A spokeswoman for the debt cancellation campaign Jubilee 2000 said that the archbishops "will be missed on the day but have both put in a lot of time to publicise the campaign".

Faith and Reason, page 20
Wright's chance, Time Out, page 28

Thousand flee in Indonesia panic

By Richard Lloyd Parry

PRESIDENT SUHARTO'S government appeared paralysed yesterday as thousands of people fled violence in the Indonesian capital, Jakarta, which has left hundreds dead.

Police and soldiers patrolled in trucks and armour and most areas were tense but peaceful after riots on Thursday night, the 32-year Suharto regime.

Dozens of shops and supermarkets in eastern Jakarta were looted. In a burnt-out shopping centre in the Klender district, medical orderlies moved more than a hundred corpses of loot-

ers and shop-keepers who were trapped when the upper floors were set alight.

Despite the chaos there was no official curfew and bandits threatened and robbed motorists travelling at night on the city's elevated expressways.

There was almost no commercial activity for the second consecutive day. Thousands of expatriates and ethnic Chinese Indonesians fled to the airport to escape a country which remains close to political and economic collapse.

A few hours after his early return from a visit to Egypt, members of the President's party, Golkar, demanded that

Inside
200 looters die as a city goes up in flames.
Mobs target the 'Jews of the East' - Pages 18 and 19

he eliminate "corruption, collusion and nepotism" and "return his mandate" as president. But senior generals expressed support for Mr Suharto and hinted at a crack-down. The opposition leaders Megawati Sukarnoputri and Amien Rais

failed to turn up for an appearance with activists demanding reform and an end to Mr Suharto's rule.

The Information Minister, Alwi Dahlan, repeated a statement by Mr Suharto that he would step down "if the people have no confidence in me". But his son-in-law, Lieutenant-General Prabowo Subianto, denied speculation that the armed forces were divided in their support for the President and promised on national television to act forcefully against rioters.

The government said it was reversing a rise in the cost of fuel oil, which provoked riots last week. Trading in the financial

markets ceased and many foreign companies closed their offices and flew out employees and their families.

Staff of the International Monetary Fund, whose austerity programme contributed to the unrest, left in a chartered plane. The British embassy advised citizens "to consider leaving", and British Airways laid on an extra flight to Malaysia. Other countries, including the US, began evacuating citizens on chartered flights.

The Malaysian government, fearing a wave of Indonesian boat-people, increased the number of patrols in the Strait of Malacca.

In brief

Justice attack

Stephen Lawrence's friend Duwayne Brooks yesterday hit out at a system which allowed racism to "attack and go free" while treating victims as "criminals". Page 2

£400,000 award

A woman who had unnecessary surgery after doctors wrongly diagnosed that her child had died in the womb was awarded £400,000 damages yesterday. Page 3



...being of sound mind, I leave all my worldly goods to my hamster, Simon.

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT explores the fascinating world of wills. Daire Bréhan talks to people who have had their lives changed, not always for the better, by a single piece of paper. Monday mornings from 18 May, 11.02 - 11.30.

BBC RADIO 4

92-95 FM & 198 LW

YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

Aaronovitch: 'The most positive role model for men now is the male stripper'

Moore: 'I don't have a problem with maleness ... You cannot be such a little flower'



David Aaronovitch (left) and Suzanne Moore: At odds over what makes men happy or miserable in a women's world

Sex war: now it's personal

David Aaronovitch: The thing that really had the steam coming out of my ears was your throwaway remark that "the repertoire of male sexual behaviour is so limited, I could almost feel sorry for them". If I were to apply that generality to women, not only would I invite a shitload of trouble but it would be unacceptable and wilfully wrong.

Suzanne Moore: You know it is so funny that this is the one thing that got to you.

DA: But it is this denigration of everything that is male. There has been a gender revolution over the last 20 years and with it an enormous increase in the success of women in the workplace; of girls in school, increases in the number of girls with degrees. All without a concomitant increase in success for boys. And it doesn't help that your generalisations denigrate every aspect of masculinity and male sexuality.

SM: You know if I was as sensitive as you I would be dead by now. If you don't like generalisations about your gender how do you think I feel? I live in the world where I'm surrounded by generalisations about women all the time. And there is no evidence that it is not predictable to be in a position of power and want to be spanked.

DA: Yes there is. The vast majority of men just don't get spanked.

SM: I don't know that.

DA: But you talk as if you do.

SM: I just don't talk as if equal-

All week, two of The Independent's columnists have been warring across the gender divide. In the wake of reports that new men are miserable in a women's world and that old men are happy to justify their extra-marital indulgences, the insults flew on our comment pages. So we locked Suzanne Moore and David Aaronovitch together in a small room. And let them slug it out....

ty has already happened. The behaviour of men still has to change and they have to be forced to change. Why else would they give up their positions of power?

DA: Now you're talking as we're where we were 20 years ago. I despair of finding any model of male behaviour that is acceptable to you.

SM: I don't have a problem with maleness. If I make a flip remark about men, its effect is not to denounce the whole of male behaviour.

DA: Yes it does, you see.

SM: No it doesn't. You cannot be such a little flower.

DA: It's not a question of floweriness, or whatever, although maybe flowers are one thing we could be that would make us less predictable.

Look at popular culture as represented on television: you say, "I

can't get enough Oprah"; I say "Oprah is driving out proper discussion" - I don't mind having both, but at the moment everything is going in the Oprah direction. Everything associated with old male notions of serious debate is tedious or boring and is not immediate enough.

SM: But you're talking about television. In the real world men are still in charge of big companies, still in charge of newspapers, still in charge of institutions. Where is this feminist, Oprah debate? Certainly not in parliament.

DA: Yes it is, it's Clinton's "I feel your pain". It's the approach for the women voters: "feel the pain, forget the policies". There is an inordinate amount of that around, the men in

power wondering how they can appeal to women.

SM: And what's wrong with that?

DA: It is good, but they are driving out some of the discussions and debates that you need to retain, despite their seriousness or pomposity. And girls can talk that language because they are more socialised than boys - there is even some discussion about whether there is some sort of genetic reason for them being socialised better...

SM: A genetic reason for men being crap you mean.

DA: Yeah, for them being less socialised. You put it in terms of them being crap, but to say that "what they are is crap" is a bit of a problem for the boys.

SM: But the socialisation of men

is not producing the kinds of men we will need for the 21st century.

DA: Ah, but the research tends to show us that one of the cardinal factors which helps boys socialise is the presence of a mother in the home. Now what are you going to say about that? To achieve, these boys need their mum!

SM: No! because there is plenty of other research that says you have this generation of useless boys because they don't have a father figure around. And clearly, mothers aren't going to stay at home, so instead of saying that's the way to do it, you have to say what else can we do?

DA: Exactly. You have to say - for instance, we have to have a positive notion of male sexuality.

SM: (spluttering) What do you think we have - it is stuffed down our throat all the time, in magazines, on television - to be a man is to have as many women as possible.

DA: On soap operas I see an almost purely negative version of male sexuality, on documentary soaps I see an almost purely negative... They're all bastards or wimps, one or the other. We have no positive way of talking about men at the moment - the most positive role model for men now is the male stripper.

SM: Why are you asking me to be positive about men - that's not my job, I've got better things to do than be positive about male sexuality... Get some men to do it.

This week

"A very rough guide to Jerusalem (1841 Edition)."

CATHEDRAL OF DREAMS is the remarkable story of Deborah Ransom and her missionary father who travelled to Jerusalem in 1841, to found a church in the Holy Land. Saturday afternoon, 16 May, 2.30 - 3.00.

"Sunday opening in Ambridge."

Is nothing sacred?"

THE ARCHERS. In addition to the omnibus, there is now an extra episode on Sundays. So now you don't have to wait until Mondays to find out who's doing what, to whom in Ambridge. Every Sunday evening, 7.02 - 7.15.

"I think life will continue just fine."

It's just that I'll miss it so."

BEFORE I SAY GOODBYE is Ruth Picardie's honest, funny and moving account of what it's like to be dying of cancer when you've got everything to live for. Weekday mornings for one week from Monday 18 May, 9.45 - 10.00.

"...being of sound mind, I leave all my worldly goods to my hamster, Simon."

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT explores the fascinating world of wills. Daire Brisban talks to people who have had their lives changed, not always for the better, by a single piece of paper. Monday mornings from 18 May, 11.02 - 11.30.

"Dear Diary, got up. Went for a walk. Founded acting dynasty."

THE AFTERNOON PLAY, "Roy and Daisy," stars Corin Redgrave and his wife Kika Markham in the true story of Corin's grandparents and their colourful life in Edwardian theatre. Monday, 18 May, 2.15 - 3.00.

"Don't read Nick Hornby's new book."

THE LATE BOOK continues with Nick Hornby's "About A Boy," the story of Will, a serial seducer with a novel chat up line and Marcus, a kid with more than enough adolescent angst. Weekday evenings, from Monday 18 May, 24.30 - 24.45.

"Hear Alan Davies bring something rare to situation comedy. Humour."

THE ALAN DAVIES SHOW is a new series starring the man himself. He's got problems with his girlfriend, his career and the toilet. Hear how it all pans out. Wednesday evenings, from 20 May, 6.30 - 7.00.

"Life, the universe and everything."

(Programmes don't come any bigger).

LEADING EDGE. In the first of a new series Geoff Watts examines the latest theories on the formation of galaxies and the glue that holds all matter together. Thursday evenings from 21 May, 9.02 - 9.30.

BBC RADIO 4

92-95FM & 198LW

YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

NHS trust pays £400,000 to woman over baby-scan error

A CALIFORNIAN businesswoman who "fell to pieces" following unnecessary surgery after doctors wrongly diagnosed that her second child had died in the womb yesterday settled her High Court damages action for £400,000.

Susan Hagstrom's daughter Christen was born healthy in March 1994 but only after her mother had endured months of worry that the drugs, X-ray and the D & C evacuation procedure she had undergone had damaged the unborn baby.

Mrs Hagstrom, 39, of Gar-

den Grove, California, repeatedly broke down as she told Mr Justice Belfield in London that she was petrified she would give birth to a deformed child.

She needed further surgery to repair her uterus and small bowel, which were perforated during the procedure, and she still suffered from abdominal pain.

Continuing psychiatric problems, which she said amounted to post traumatic stress disorder, had forced her to resign as marketing director for a Californian real estate company in

December 1994 and she had not worked since. She said that it was all she could do during the day to take Christen and her elder sister, Danielle, eight, to school.

Judgment had already been entered in favour of Mrs Hagstrom against Royal Surrey County and St Luke's Hospitals NHS Trust over the negligent treatment she received in August 1993 when a scan at eight weeks' gestation wrongly suggested the absence of a foetal heartbeat.

Today, five days into a hear-

ing over the amount of damages to be awarded, the two sides announced that the £1m-plus claim had been settled for £400,000 with costs.

Mrs Hagstrom was not in court and her husband Mark, whose devotion was praised by the judge, would not comment.

The judge described Mrs Hagstrom as an "enormously impressive witness" whose veracity he accepted unreservedly.

He added: "I accept entirely that her basic condition was brought on by these appalling matters".



Susan Hagstrom had unnecessary surgery after a foetus was misdiagnosed as dead in her womb. Photograph: Neville Eider

The one man in America who

'He seemed' now to be the embodiment of the fully emancipated male, perhaps the only one in America.' That was how the American-Italian writer **Gay Talese** (left)



described Frank Sinatra at 50.

The year was 1965, Beatlemania was at its height, but Sinatra, product of everything that was pre-Sixties, was at the height of his powers; he was worshipped and he was feared. In this piece, first published in the American edition of 'Esquire', Talese captures him with a vividness and knowingness that has rarely been equalled

FRANK SINATRA, holding a glass of bourbon in one hand and a cigarette in the other, stood in a dark corner of the bar between two attractive but fading blondes who sat waiting for him to say something. But he said nothing; he had been silent during much of the evening, except that now, in this private club in Beverly Hills, he seemed even more distant, staring out through the smoke and semi-darkness into a large room beyond the bar, where dozens of young couples sat huddled around small tables or twisted in the centre of the floor to the clamorous clang of folk-rock music blaring from the stereo. The two blondes knew, as did Sinatra's four male friends who stood nearby, that it was a bad idea to force conversation upon him when he was in this mood of sullen silence, a mood that had hardly been uncommon during this first week of November, a month before his fiftieth birthday.

Sinatra had been working on a film that he now disliked, could not wait to finish; he was tired of all the publicity attached to his dating the 20-year-old Mia Farrow; he was angry that a CBS television documentary of his life, to be shown in two weeks, was reportedly prying into his privacy, even speculating on his possible friendship with Mafia leaders; he was worried about his starring role in an hour-long NBC show entitled *Sinatra - A Man And His Music*, which would require that he sing 18 songs with a voice that at this particular moment, just a few nights before the taping was to begin, was weak and sore and uncertain. Sinatra was ill. He was the victim of an ailment so common that most people would consider it trivial. But when it gets to Sinatra it can plunge him into a state of anguish, deep depression, panic, even rage. Frank Sinatra had a cold.

Sinatra with a cold is Picasso without paint, Ferrari without fuel - only worse. For the common cold robs Sinatra of that unsurable jewel, his voice, cutting into the core of his confidence, and it not only affects his own psyche but also seems to cause a kind of psychosomatic nasal drip within dozens of people who work for him, drink with him, love him, depend on him for their own welfare and stability. A Sinatra with a cold can, in a small way, send vibrations through the entertainment industry and beyond, as surely as a President of the United States, suddenly sick, can shake the national economy.

For Frank Sinatra was now involved with many things involving many people - his own film company, his record company, his private airline, his missile-parts firm, his real-estate holdings across the nation, his personal staff of 75 - which are only a portion of the power he is and has come to represent. He seemed now to be also the embodiment of the fully emancipated male, perhaps the only one in America, the man who can do anything he wants, anything, can do it because he has the money, the energy, and no apparent guilt. In an age when the very young seem to be taking over, protesting and picketing and demanding change, Frank Sinatra survives as a national phenomenon, one of the few pre-war products to withstand the test of time.

But now, standing at this bar in Beverly Hills, Sinatra had a cold, and

he continued to drink quietly and he seemed miles away in his private world, not even reacting when suddenly the stereo in the other room switched to a Sinatra song, "In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning".

It is a lovely ballad that he first recorded 10 years ago, and it now inspired many young couples who had been sitting, tired of twisting, to get up and move slowly around the dance floor, holding one another very close, Sinatra's intonation, precisely clipped, yet full and flowing, gave a deeper meaning to the simple lyrics: "In the wee small hours of the morning, while the whole wide world is fast asleep, you lie awake, and think about the girl..."

It was, like so many of his classics, a song that evoked loneliness and sensuality, and when blended with the dim light and the alcohol and nicotine and late-night needs, it became a kind of airy aphrodisiac. Undoubtedly the words from this song, and others like it, had put millions in the mood; it was music to make love by, and doubtless much love had been made by it all over America at night in cars, while the batteries burned down, in cottages by the lake, on beaches during balmy summer evenings, in secluded parks and exclusive penthouses and furnished rooms, in cabin cruisers and cabs and cabanas - in all places where Sinatra's songs could be heard were these words that warmed women, wooed and won them, snipped the final thread of inhibition and gratified the male egos of ungrateful lovers. Two generations of men had been the beneficiaries of such ballads, for which they were eternally in his debt, for which they may eternally hate him. Nevertheless, here he was, the man himself, in the early hours of the morning in Beverly Hills, out of range.

Now Sinatra said a few words to the blondes. Then he turned from the bar and began to walk towards the pool room. One of Sinatra's other men friends moved in to keep the girls company. Brad Dexter, who had been standing in the corner talking to some other people, now followed Sinatra.

The room cracked with the clack of billiard balls. There were about a dozen spectators in the room, most of them young men who were watching Leo Durocher shoot against two other aspiring hustlers who were not very good. This private drinking club has among its membership many actors, directors, writers, models, nearly all of them a good deal younger than Sinatra or Durocher and much more casual in the way they dress for the evening. Many of the young women, their long hair flowing loosely below their shoulders, wore tight pants and very expensive sweaters; and a few of the young men wore blue or green velour shirts with high collars, and narrow, tight pants and Italian loafers.

It was obvious from the way Sinatra looked at these people in the pool room that they were not his style, but he leaned back against a high stool that was against the wall, holding his drink in his right hand, and said nothing, just watched Durocher slam the billiard balls back and forth. The younger men in the room, accustomed to seeing Sinatra at this club, treated him with out deference, although they said nothing offensive. They were a cool young group, very California-cool and casual, and one of the coolest

seemed to be a little guy, very quick of movement, who had a sharp profile, pale blue eyes, light brown hair, and square eyeglasses. He wore a pair of brown corduroy slacks, a green shaggy-dog Shetland sweater, a tan suede jacket, and Game Warden boots, for which he had recently paid \$60.

Frank Sinatra, leaning against the stool, sniffing a bit from his cold, could not take his eyes off the Game Warden boots. Once, after gazing at them for a few moments, he turned away; but now he was focused on them again. The owner of the boots, who was just standing in them watching the pool game, was named Harlan Ellison; he was a writer who had just completed work on a screenplay, *The Oscar*.

Finally Sinatra could not contain himself. "Hey," he yelled in his slightly harsh voice that still had a soft, sharp edge. "Those Italian boots?"

"No," Ellison said. "Spanish?" "No." "Are they English boots?" "Look, I dunno, man," Ellison shot back, frowning at Sinatra, then turning away again.

The pool room was suddenly silent. Leo Durocher, who had been poised behind his cue and was bent low, just froze in that position for a second. Nobody moved. Then Sinatra moved away from the stool and walked with that slow, arrogant swagger of his toward Ellison, the hard tap of Sinatra's shoes the only sound in the room. Then, looking down at Ellison with a slightly raised eyebrow and a tricky little smile, Sinatra asked: "You expecting a storm?"

Harlan Ellison moved a step to the side. "Look, is there any reason why you're talking to me?"

"I don't like the way you're dressed," Sinatra said.

"Hate to shake you up," Ellison said, "but I dress to suit myself."

Now there was some rumbling in the room, and somebody said, "C'mon, Harlan, let's get out of here," and Leo Durocher made his pool shot and said, "Yeah, c'mon."

But Ellison stood his ground. Sinatra said: "What do you do?"

"I'm a plumber," Ellison replied. "No, no, he's not," another young man quickly yelled from across the table. "He wrote *The Oscar*."

"Oh, yeah," Sinatra said, "well I've seen it, and it's a piece of crap."

"That's strange," Ellison said, "because they haven't even released it yet."

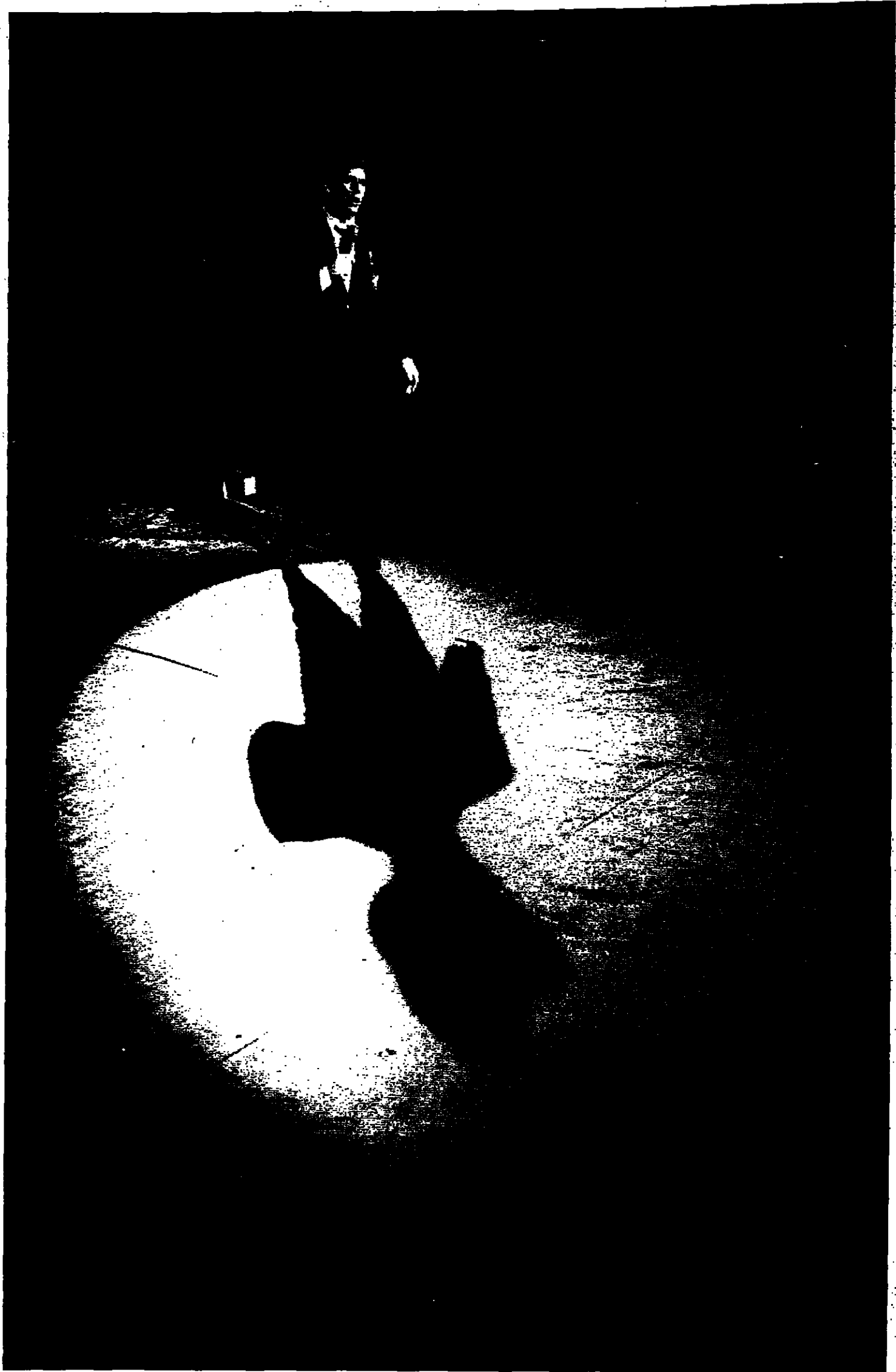
"Well, I've seen it," Sinatra repeated, "and it's a piece of crap."

Now Brad Dexter, very anxious, very big opposite the small figure of Ellison, said, "C'mon, kid, I don't want you in this room."

"Hey," Sinatra interrupted Dexter, "can't you see I'm talking to this guy?"

Dexter was confused. Then his whole attitude changed, and Dexter's voice went soft and he said to Ellison, almost with a plea, "Why do you persist in tormenting me?"

The whole scene was becoming ridiculous, and it seemed that Sinatra was only half-serious, perhaps just reacting out of sheer boredom or inner despair; at any rate, after a few more exchanges Harlan Ellison left the room. By this time the word had got out to those on the dance floor about the Sinatra-Ellison exchange,



Sinatra steps out of the shadows during rehearsals in 1961

Photograph: Dennis Stock/Magnum

and somebody went to look for the manager of the club. But somebody else said that the manager had already heard about it - and had quickly gone out through the door, hopped in his car and driven home. So the assistant manager went into the pool room.

"I don't want anybody in here without coats and ties," Sinatra snapped. The assistant manager nodded, and walked back to his office.

On the following Monday, a cloudy and unseasonably cool California day, more than 100 people gathered inside a white television studio, an enormous room dominated by a white stage, white walls, and with dozens of lights and lamps dangling; it rather resembled a gigantic operating room. In this room, within an hour or so, NBC was scheduled to begin taping an hour-long show that would be televised in colour on the night of 24 November and would highlight the 25-year career of Frank Sinatra as a public entertainer. It would not attempt to probe, as the forthcoming CBS Sinatra documentary allegedly would, that area of Sinatra's life that he regards as private. The NBC show would be mainly an hour of Sinatra singing some of the hits that carried him from Hoboken to Hollywood, a show that would be interrupted only now and then by a few film clips and commercials for Budweiser beer.

Prior to his cold, Sinatra had been very excited about this show; he saw here an opportunity not only to appeal to those nostalgic, but also to communicate his talent to some rock'n'rollers: in a sense, he was battling the Beatles. The press released

stressed this, reading: "If you happen to be tired of kid singers wearing mops of hair thick enough to hide a crate of melons... it should be refreshing to consider the entertainment value of a video special titled *Sinatra - A Man And His Music*..."

But now, in this NBC studio in Los Angeles, there was an atmosphere of anticipation and tension because of the uncertainty of the Sinatra voice. Minutes later, the real Frank Sinatra walked out.

He had been unable to rid himself of the cold, but was going to try to sing anyway because the schedule was tight and thousands of dollars were involved at this moment in the assembling of the orchestra and crews and the rental of the studio. But when Sinatra, on his way to his small rehearsal room to warm up his voice, looked into the studio and saw that the stage and orchestra platform were not close together, as he had specifically requested, his lips tightened and he was obviously very upset. A few moments later, from his rehearsal room, could be heard the pounding of his fist against the top of the piano and the voice of his accompanist, Bill Miller, saying: "Guess I got to change my whole act."

When he stroled into the studio the musicians all picked up their instruments and stiffened in their seats. Sinatra cleared his throat a few times and then, after rehearsing a few ballads with the orchestra, he sang "Don't Worry About Me" to his satisfaction and, being uncertain of how long his voice could last, suddenly became impatient.

"Why don't we tape this mother?" he called out, looking up toward the glass booth where the director, Dwight Hemion, and his staff were sitting. Their heads seemed to be down, focusing on the control board.

"Why don't we tape this mother?" Sinatra repeated.

The production stage manager, who stands near the camera wearing a headset, repeated Sinatra's words exactly into his line to the control room: "Why don't we tape this mother?"

Hemion did not answer. Possibly his switch was off. It was hard to know, because of the obscuring reflections the lights made against the glass booth.

"Why don't we put on a coat and tie," said Sinatra, then wearing a high-necked yellow pullover, "and tape this..."

Suddenly Hemion's voice came over the sound amplifier, very calmly: "Okay, Frank, would you mind going back over..."

"Yes, I would mind going back," Sinatra snapped.

He rehearsed a few more songs, once or twice interrupting the orchestra when a certain instrumental sound was not quite what he wanted. It was hard to tell how well his voice was going to hold up, for this was early in the show; up to this point, however, everybody in the room seemed pleased, particularly when he sang an old, sentimental favourite written more than 20 years ago by Jimmy Van Heusen and Phil Silvers, "Nancy", inspired by the first of Sinatra's three children when she was just a few years old.

"If I don't see her each day, I miss her... gee what a thrill, each time I kiss her..."

As Sinatra sang these words, though he has sung them hundreds and hundreds of times in the past, it was suddenly obvious to everybody in the studio that something quite special must be going on inside the man, because something quite special was coming out. He was singing

now, cold or no cold, with power and warmth, he was letting himself go, the public arrogance was gone, the private side was in this song about the girl who, it is said, understands him better than anybody else.

Sinatra stood on the stage, arms folded, glaring up across the cameras toward Hemion. Sinatra had sung *Nancy* with probably all he had in his voice on this day. The next few numbers contained raspy notes, and twice his voice completely cracked. But now Hemion was in the control booth out of communication; then he was down in the studio walking over to where Sinatra stood. A few minutes later they both left the studio and were on the way up to the control booth.

The tape was replayed for Sinatra. He watched only about five minutes of it before he started to shake his head. Then he said to Hemion: "Forget it, just forget it. You're wasting your time. What you got there," Sinatra said, nodding to the singing image of himself on the television screen, "is a man with a cold." Then he left the control booth, ordering that the whole day's performance be scrubbed and future taping postponed until he had recovered.

After spending the week in Palm Springs, his cold much better, Frank Sinatra returned to Los Angeles, in time to see the long-awaited CBS documentary with his family. At about 9pm he drove to the home of his former wife, Nancy, and had dinner with her and their two daughters. Their son, whom they rarely see these days, was out of town. The CBS show, narrated by Walter Cronkite, began at 10pm. A minute before that, the Sinatra family, having

could do whatever he wanted



Portraits of the artist: Sinatra through the years. His career took him from sharp-suited crooner to Hollywood tough guy, but his style was always his own

Photographs: Rex Features, Sygma, Bob Willoughby/Redferns

finished dinner, turned their chairs around and faced the camera, united for whatever disaster might follow.

And like so much of Hollywood's fear, the apprehension about the CBS show proved to be without foundation. It was a highly flattering hour that did not deeply probe—as rumours suggested it would—into Sinatra's love life, or the Mafia, or other areas of his private province. While the documentary was not authorised, wrote Jack Gould in the next day's *New York Times*, "it could have been".

The next day Sinatra, following the orchestra, walked into the NBC studio, which did not resemble in the slightest the scene here of eight days before. On this occasion Sinatra was in fine voice; he cracked jokes between numbers; nothing could upset him.

When the show was over, Sinatra watched the rerun on the monitor in the control room. He was very pleased, shaking hands with Dwight Hemion and his assistants. Then the whisky bottles were opened in Sinatra's dressing room. Telegrams and telephone calls continued to be received from all over the country with praise for the CBS show. There was even a call from the CBS producer, Don Hewitt, with whom Sinatra had been so angry a few days before. And Sinatra was still angry, feeling that CBS had betrayed him, though the show itself was not objectionable.

"Shall I drop a line to Hewitt?" his press agent asked.

"Can you send a fist through the mail?" Sinatra asked.

Sinatra was tired of all the talk, the gossip, the theory—tired of reading quotes about himself, of hearing what people were saying about him all over town.

"He has everything, he cannot sleep, he gives nice gifts, he is not happy, but he would not trade, even for happiness, what he is ..."

"He is a piece of our past—but only we have aged, he hasn't ... we are dogged by domesticity, he isn't ... we have compensations, he doesn't ... it is our fault, not his ..."

"He controls the menus of every Italian restaurant in Los Angeles; if you want north Italian cooking, fly to Milan ..."

"Men follow him, imitate him, fight to be near him ... there is something about the locker room, the barracks about him ... bird ... bird ..."

"He believes you must play it big, wide, expansively—the more open you are, the more you take in, your dimensions deepen, you grow, you become more what you are—bigger, richer ..."

"He is better than anybody else, or at least they think he is, and he has to live up to it."—Nancy Sinatra Jr.

"He is calm on the outside—inwardly a million things are happening to him."—Dick Bakalyan.

"He has an insatiable desire to live every moment to its fullest because, I guess, he feels that right around the corner is extinction."—Brad Dexter.

"All I ever got out of any of my marriages was the two years Artie Shaw financed on an analyst's couch."—Ava Gardner.

"We weren't mother and son—we were buddies."—Dolly Sinatra.

Sinatra said it had been a tedious three weeks, and now he just wanted to get away, go to Las Vegas, let off some steam. So he hopped in his jet and soared over the California hills across the Nevada desert, then over miles and miles of desert to The Sands and the Clay-Patterson fight.

On the eve of the fight he stayed up all night and slept through most of the afternoon, though his recorded voice could be heard singing in the lobby of The Sands, in the gambling casino, even in the toilets.

The fight, called a holy war between Muslims and Christians, was preceded by the introduction of three balding ex-champions, Rocky Marciano, Joe Louis and Sonny Liston—and then there was "The Star Spangled Banner", sung by another man from out of the past, Eddie Fisher.

Floyd Patterson chased Clay around the ring in the first round, but was unable to reach him, and from then on he was Clay's toy, the bout ending in a technical knockout in the 12th round. Half-an-hour later, nearly everybody had forgotten about the fight and was back at the gambling tables, or lining up to buy tickets for the Dean Martin-Sinatra-Bishop nightclub routine on the stage of The Sands. This routine, which includes Sammy Davis Jr when he is in town, consists of a few songs and much cut-

ting up, all of it very informal, very special, and rather ethnic—Martin, a drink in hand, asking Bishop: "did you ever see a Jew jitsu?"; and Bishop playing a Jewish waiter, warning the two Italians to watch out "because I got my own group—the Matzia".

Then, after the last show at The Sands, the Sinatra crowd, which now numbered about 20—and included Jilly, who had flown in from New York; Jimmy Cannon, Sinatra's favourite sports columnist; Harold Gibbons, a Teamster official expected to take over if Hoffa went to jail—all got into a line of cars and headed for another club. It was 3am. The night was young.

They stopped at The Sahara, taking a long table near the back, and listened to a bald-headed little comedian named Don Rickles.

By 4am, Frank Sinatra led the group out of The Sahara, some of them carrying their glasses of whisky with them, sipping it along the sidewalk and in the cars; then, returning to The Sands, they walked into the casino. It was still packed with people; the roulette wheels were spinning, and the crapshooters screaming in the far corner.

Sinatra, holding a shot glass of bourbon in his left hand, walked through the crowd. He, unlike some of his friends, was perfectly pressed, his tuxedo tie precisely pointed, his shoes unsmudged. He never seems to lose his dignity, never lets his guard completely down no matter how much he has drunk, nor how long he has been up. He never sways when he walks, like Dean Martin, nor does he ever dance in the aisles or jump up on tables, like Sammy Davis.

A part of Sinatra, no matter where he is, is never there. There is always a part of him, though sometimes a small part, that remains in *Il Padrone*. Even now, resting his shot glass on the blackjack table, facing the dealer, Sinatra stood a bit back from the table, not leaning against it. He reached under his tuxedo jacket into his trouser pocket and came up with a thick but clean wad of bills. Gently he peeled off a \$100 bill and placed it on the green baize table. The dealer dealt him two cards. Sinatra called for a third card, overbid, lost the hundred.

Without a change of expression,

Sinatra put down a second \$100 bill. He lost that, then he put down a third, and lost that. Then he placed two \$100 bills on the table and lost those. Finally, putting his sixth \$100 bill on the table, and losing it, Sinatra moved away from the table, nodding to the man, and announcing: "Good dealer."

The crowd that had gathered around him now opened up to let him through. But a woman stepped in front of him, handing him a piece of paper to autograph. He signed it and then he said: "Thank you."

In the rear of The Sands' large dining room was a long table reserved for Sinatra. The table was about the same size as the one reserved for Sinatra whenever he is at Jilly's in New York; and the people seated around this table in Las Vegas were many of the same people who are often seen with Sinatra at Jilly's or at a restaurant in California, or in Italy, or in New Jersey, or wherever Sinatra happens to be.

When Sinatra sits to dine, his trusted friends are close; and no matter where he is, no matter how elegant the place may be, there is something of the neighbourhood showing, because Sinatra, no matter how far he has come, is still something of the boy from the neighbourhood—only now he can take his neighbourhood with him.

In some ways, this quasi-family affair at a reserved table in a public place is the closest thing Sinatra now has to home life. Perhaps, having had a home and left it, this approximation is as close as he cares to come; although his does not seem precisely so, because he speaks with such warmth about his family, keeps in close touch with his first wife, and insists that she make no decision without first consulting him.

This was his second night in Las Vegas, and Frank Sinatra sat with friends in The Sands' dining room until nearly 8am. He slept through much of the day, then flew back to Los Angeles, and on the following morning he was driving his little golf cart through the Paramount Pictures movie lot. He was scheduled to complete two final scenes with the sultry blonde actress Verna Lisi, in the film *Assault on a Queen*. There were only two scenes left: a short one,

to be filmed in the pool, and a longer and passionate one featuring Sinatra and Verna Lisi, to be shot on a simulated beach.

Frank Sinatra was on the beach, supposedly gazing up at the stars, and Verna Lisi was to approach him, toss one of her shoes near him to announce her presence, then sit near him and prepare for a passionate session. Just before beginning, Miss Lisi made a practice toss of her shoe toward the prone figure of Sinatra sprawled on the beach. As she tossed her shoe, Sinatra called out, "Hit me in my bird and I'm going home."

Verna Lisi, who understands little English and certainly none of Sinatra's special vocabulary, looked confused, but everybody behind the camera laughed. She threw the shoe toward him. It twirled in the air and landed on his stomach. "Well, that's about three inches too high," he announced.

Then Jack Donahue had them rehearse their lines, and Sinatra, still very charged from the Las Vegas trip, and anxious to get the cameras rolling, said, "Let's try one." Donahue, not certain that Sinatra and Lisi knew their lines well enough, never the less said okay, and an assistant with a clipboard called, "419, Take 1," and Verna Lisi approached with the shoe and tossed it at Frank lying on the beach. It fell short of his thigh, and Sinatra's right eye raised almost imperceptibly, but the crew got the message, and smiled.

"What do the stars tell you tonight?" Miss Lisi said, delivering her first line, and sitting next to Sinatra on the beach. "The stars tell me tonight I'm an idiot," Sinatra said, "a gold-plated idiot to get mixed up in this thing ..."

"Cut," Donahue said. There were some microphone shadows on the sand, and Verna Lisi was not sitting in the proper place near Sinatra.

"419, Take 2," the clipboard man called.

Miss Lisi again approached, threw the shoe at him, this time falling short—Sinatra exhaling only slightly—and she said: "What do the stars tell you tonight?"

"The stars tell me I'm an idiot, a gold-plated idiot to get mixed up in

this thing ...". Then, according to the script, Sinatra was to continue, "... do you know what we're getting into? The minute we step on the deck of the *Queen Mary*, we've just tattooed ourselves." But Sinatra, who often improvises on lines, recited them: "... do you know what we're getting into? The minute we step on the deck of that mother's-ass ship." "No, no," Donahue interrupted, shaking his head, "I don't think that's right."

The cameras stopped, some people laughed, and Sinatra looked up from his position in the sand as if he had been unfairly interrupted. "I don't see why that can't work ..." he began. But Richard Conte, standing behind the camera, yelled: "It won't play in London." Donahue pushed his hand through his thinning grey hair and said, but not really in anger, "You know, that scene was pretty good until somebody blew the line."

While Sinatra does not mind hammering it up a bit on a movie set, he is extremely serious about his recording sessions; as he explained to a British writer, Robin Douglas-Home: "Once you're on that record singing, it's you and you alone. If it's bad and gets you criticised, it's you who's to blame—no one else. If it's good, it's also you. With a film it's never like that; there are producers and scriptwriters, and hundreds of men in offices, and the thing is taken right out of your hands. With a record, you're it."

It no longer matters what song he is singing, or who wrote the words; they are all his words, his sentiments, they are chapters from the lyrical novel of his life.

When Frank Sinatra drives to the studio, he seems to dance out of the car across the sidewalk into the front door; then, snapping his fingers, he is standing in front of the orchestra in an intimate, airtight room, and soon he is dominating every man, every instrument, every sound wave. Some of the musicians have accompanied him for 25 years, have grown old hearing him sing "You Make Me Feel So Young".

When his voice is on, as it was tonight, Sinatra is in ecstasy, the room becomes electric, there is an excitement that spreads through the orchestra and is felt in the control booth; there are also numbers of

pretty women standing in the booth behind the engineers, women who smile at Sinatra and softly move their bodies to the mellow mood of his music:

"Will this be moon love, Nothing but moon love, Will you be gone when the dawn, Comes stealing through ..."

After he is finished, the record is played back on tape, and Nancy Sinatra, who has just walked in, joins her father near the front of the orchestra to hear the playback. They listen silently, all eyes on them, the king, the princess; and when the music ends there is applause from the control booth, Nancy smiles, and her father snaps his fingers and says, kicking a foot: "Ooba-deeba-boobedo!"

The musicians put their instruments into their cases, grab their coats, and begin to file out, saying good night to Sinatra. He knows them all by name, knows much about them personally, from their bachelor days, through their ups and downs, as they know him.

The rest of the month was bright and balmy. The record session had gone magnificently, the film was finished, the television shows were out of the way, and now Sinatra was driving out to his office to begin co-ordinating his latest projects. He had an engagement at The Sands, a new spy film called *The Naked Runner*, to be shot in England, and a couple more albums to do. And within a week he would be 50.

"Life is a beautiful thing, As long as I hold the string, I'd be a silly so-and-so, If I should ever let go."

Frank Sinatra stopped his car. The light was red. Pedestrians passed quickly across his windshield but, as usual, one did not. It was a girl in her twenties. She remained at the kerb staring at him. Through the corner of his left eye he could see her, and he knew, because it happens almost every day, that she was thinking. It looks like him, but is it? Just before the light turned green, Sinatra turned toward her, looked directly into her eyes, waiting for the reaction he knew would come. It came, and he smiled. She smiled. And he was gone.

It didn't mean a thing unless Ol' Blue Eyes made it swing

Once criticised for singing songs as if he believed them, that was precisely what made him the best. By Mark Steyn

IN RECORD stores, Frank operated in the territory labelled "middle of the road" or "easy listening". But for many Sinatra makes for distinctly uneasy listening, and hardly anyone is in the middle of the road about him. The message is simple, even if it takes his worst song to spell it out: he did it his way. And his way has been better for longer than anybody else in the history of popular song.

Before Sinatra, male singers aspired to the condition of Bing Crosby, who sang like he played golf: let's knock it around for a while and get to the clubhouse without breaking into a sweat. When Crosby sang, that's all he did: sing. You realise the difference when you listen to Frankie's version of a big Bing hit: "We're off to ba-ake."

A *Sunshine Cake*... With Sinatra, "ba-ake" just

sounds fa-ake. He can't do it. You can almost hear him cringing. His problem is that the song isn't about anything except singing a jolly song. It's enough for Bing, but not for Frank.

For a more extreme example, try "Home on the Range". Crosby's says nothing other than "Ah, let's gather round the old joanna and sing a well-loved favourite from 1873." Sinatra's is extraordinary: the guy sounds like his home really is on the range and the deer and the antelope are frolicking about 15 yards from the microphone. Inevitably, there was soon heard a discouraging word: he sings songs, said one early reviewer, as if he believes them. And that was meant as a criticism.

Sinatra was the first male singer

to say, "Hey, all these songs about women whose men done them wrong. It works the other way, too." So, he called up Ira Gerstein and persuaded him to maulate "The Man That Got Away" into "The Gal..."

Of all the pop idols, from Jolson to Madonna, who ventured into films, Sinatra's easily the best. You can tell how good an actor he is from the songs: these numbers seem first-person autobiographical in a way that Bing's or Ella's never are.

But for someone who represents the apogee of popular singing, he's never really been, apart from that first flush of bobbysoxers, a pop singer. Pop is fashion and Sinatra's usually been at odds with the prevailing fashion.

When pop singers were regular guys like Bing, Frank was spilling his guts out and introducing to the Hit Parade such fine emotional niceties as self-disgust. When Eisenhower's America promoted picket-fence family values, he re-cast himself as a ring-a-ding, swingin' bachelor. At 50, when most celebrities are still pretending they are 28, Sinatra embraced premature old age and songs of wistful regret: "When I was 17 It Was a Very Good Year".

Jerome Kern once gave the young British composer Vivian Ellis a piece of advice: "Carry on being uncommercial. There's a lot of money in it." It's worked for Sinatra. In the Fifties, the smart money was on Mitch Miller, head honcho at

Columbia, the man who single-handedly produced the worst records of the era and debauched the currency of mainstream Tin Pan Alley.

It was Miller who insisted Frank record the atrocious "Mama Will Bark" with the big-breasted Scandinavian, Dagmar. Sinatra left Columbia but never forgave Miller. Long after, they happened to be crossing a Vegas lobby from opposite ends. Miller extended his hand in friendship; Sinatra snarled, "Fuck you! Keep walking." The phrase could be the tempo marking on any one of those swing arrangements.

"Fly Me To The Moon" was written by Bart Howard in 1954 as a waltz. In the past 30 years, have you heard anyone play it that way? There

were more than 100 recordings of it and not one of them did anything until Sinatra's. Think of the opening titles of the film *Wall Street*: the commuter trains, ferries, buses and subways feed the workers into the city, swarming up from their subterranean tunnels and on to the pavements beneath the skyscrapers. Above it all Sinatra sings:

"Fly me to the moon And let me play among the stars..."

The film is an emblem of the Eighties, but it takes a 1964 album to kick-start it. Without the song, the possibilities, all the secret ambitions spring to life and, like the buildings, reach for the sky.

At one recording session, Sinatra

was asked by an arranger if he could sing in a particular key. "Sing it in..." he said. "I can't even walk in that key." But 4/4 is a time signature you can walk in, chopping up the syllables for that high-roller "swagger." Frank walks like America," said Sonny Bono. "Cocksure."

When Americans really did fly to the moon in 1969, the astronauts took Sinatra on their portable tape recorder singing "Fly Me To The Moon". Any other nation would have chosen the "Ode to Joy" or "Also Sprach Zarathustra", but Buzz Aldrin knew what the sound of our century is: what's the breezy confidence of the American dream if not Sinatra in 4/4?

With any luck, when the little green men finally land, they'll have their hats pushed back on their heads, going "Ring-a-ding-ding!"

By Andrew Buncombe

It is understood that Mr Mawdsley was arrested a week ago in the town of Moulmein in the Shan province of Burma, close to the border with Thai-

Mr Mawdsley, originally from Ormskirk, Lancashire, was allowed

It is 10 years since the military junta, now known as SPADC or the State Peace and Development Council, crushed the democracy movement. In elections held in 1990 Suu Kyi's party obtained 82 per cent of the vote but the junta refused to accept the result.

ABOUT 500 basking sharks gathered off Cornwall, forcing some fishermen to head for shore. A Wildlife Trust spokeswoman said: "The animals can be up to 35ft long, and even if a smaller one surfaced under a boat, it could be dangerous." The harmless sharks, now protected, were following plankton, their food.

BEC

Summertime blues: Britain basks in good weather, but we still can't get a drink in the Continental-style café and the air quality's lousy



Continental life appearing on the streets of London. But outdated laws have hindered the growth of café-bars Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Ozone fear mars sunshine weekend

By Mark Oliver

THE THREAT of ozone pollution is casting a shadow over the sunny weather forecast for this weekend.

Earlier this week, the Government released summer smog warnings but rain dispelled any real problem. Yesterday, however, experts said that they expected ozone levels to increase to potentially "high" levels over the next few days.

"We've had rain this week which washes ozone out of the atmosphere," said Michael Dukes, from the Press Association Weather Centre. "But we are having very sunny weather now and I expect the ozone levels to build up. It happens gradually if the days stay sunny without the weather breaking. I expect ozone levels will rise everywhere in the UK, apart from Northern Ireland, to moderate and possibly high levels in some areas."

A spokeswoman for the Meteorological Office said: "We are taking the risk of smog seriously because it's so still at the moment."

Mr Dukes said: "Obviously the wind is a factor as it mixes pollution with cleaner air and there are low levels of wind expected over the next few days."

He added that, contrary to public perceptions, an increase in ozone will choke up the countryside more than the cities. "I'm sure people think of pollution as being an urban problem but the other pollutants in cities get rid of ozone fairly quickly."

Asthma sufferers and those with respiratory problems will need to be careful when outside, the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions said. "Most people will experience no ill effects," a spokeswoman said, "but those suffering from lung disease - including

asthma - should be aware their symptoms may worsen."

The elderly should be particularly careful and anyone who has noticed their breathing being affected by hot weather in the past should also avoid strenuous activity, she added.

The environment minister, Michael Meacher, said that everybody needed to "do their bit" to reduce air pollutants. A spokeswoman from his department said that as cars were the major source of ozone in cities, anyone who left their motor at home would help reduce the smog. "People need to ask themselves before a journey - do I really need to use the car?" she asked. "And if they are stuck in a traffic jam they should turn the engine off."

She added that not using solvent-based paints would also help and people should refrain from burning solid fuels.

MP urges relaxing of drinking laws that squeeze out café-bars

By Colin Brown and
Linus Gregoriadis

READING the newspaper in a café-bar with a relaxing glass of beaumont and a cappuccino is the sort of continental scene that has already arrived in Britain.

But the growth of European-style cafés has been hindered by outdated drinking laws which mean that, in order to sell alcohol to customers without a meal, they need the same kind of licence as a pub.

Gisela Stuart, the Labour MP for Birmingham Edgbaston, is urging the Home Office - which is reviewing the licensing laws - to introduce a new hybrid licence for café-bars which will allow them to serve wine and beer but not spirits. The present statutes are more than 30 years old.

After speaking to licensing magistrates in Birmingham, she is convinced that Britain should be brought into line with the rest of Europe. "Any place which operates like a café and serves a pint of beer or a glass of wine has to have a restaurant or pub licence," she said.

"It seems a shame that you can go to the Continent and have a glass of wine in a café-bar when you can't always do the same here. It would be good to have café-bars in the

centre of Birmingham. Birmingham is an international city which caters for large numbers of international and local visitors, particularly along the canal and city centre. To me it is a question of growth and provision of service."

Ministers have told her that a review of the licensing laws is being carried out, and they are sympathetic, but it could be two years before an appropriate legislative slot is found. She is considering tabling amendments to a forthcoming law and order Bill to speed up the action.

Ms Stuart, a former law lecturer who was educated in Germany, said: "At Christmas they had *glühwein* at one café in Birmingham centre, but they had to have it fenced off and someone at the entrance checking everyone was over 18."

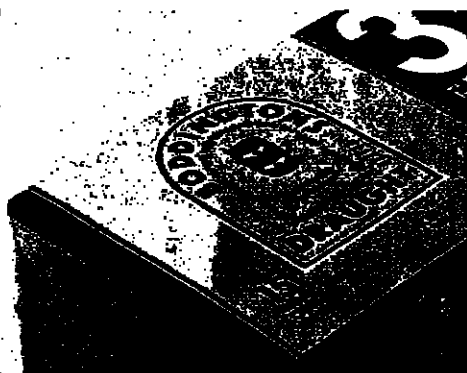
David Lees, the principal clerk for licensing in Birmingham, said that the licensing laws did not offer enough flexibility. A new type of licence could be granted more easily because it would meet with less resistance from police, he said.

He added: "Under the proposals, there would be a new type of licence for a café-bar to provide an alternative to a pub or restaurant. There are no concrete plans for these yet but these are being formulated."

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By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

The meeting was intended to allow the backbenchers to sound off on the issues they wanted raising in the Queen's speech, but those who attended said it showed there was

Mr Blair is unlikely to take up many of the ideas, which smack of old-style Labour. The Government has made it clear there will be no attempt to restore the link between earnings and pensions, and ministers are wary of becoming embroiled in the controversy over fox-hunting caused by the private members' Bill by Michael

Ministers also at the meeting privately gave assurances that although the CSA will not be abolished, it will be reformed, by taking a fixed percentage of salary from errant fathers. This would be simpler than the present system of taking decisions on each individual case, which has led to massive backlogs and anger over claims.



By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

"The reality is unless these issues are addressed in a way that is widely perceived as being satisfactory, I think that GPs are likely to walk away from the system. They fear that patient care is going to be affected if they cannot refer and prescribe in a clinically justifiable way in the interests of their patients."

Mr Milburn has reassured the GPs that they will retain their status as independent contractors in the NHS, they will keep their clinical freedom and they will be allowed to over-


Mr Milburn made a conciliatory move yesterday by warning health authorities they had to consult GPs before establishing the primary care groups.

"I am shocked when GPs write to me and say they have never ever met the chief executive of the health authority," he said.

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Sky TV s
This Life

هكذا من الأصل

Cannes '98: Film festival premières for the psychedelic world of a Seventies-cult book and the story of Joe, an alcoholic Glaswegian



Taiwan's Tang Kui Mei, star of *The Hole*, a Cannes competition film directed by 1994 Golden Lion Winner Tsai Ming-Liang. Photograph: Brian Harris

Sex symbol goes gonzo in tale of early drug days

By David Lister
in Cannes

ONE OF the great cult novels of the last 30 years, Hunter S Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, has finally been brought to the screen in a version unlikely to escape controversy.

Yesterday, the film's director, Monty Python member Terry Gilliam, defended its powerful drugs imagery and said it was time to take a more grown-up view of drugs.

The 1971 book told of journalist Thompson's journey with a friend to Las Vegas in an orgy of drug-taking as the dream of the Sixties faded. His reportage style, told through the device of fiction with heavy-lidded eyes of psychedelia, gave birth to a new genre, "gonzo journalism", and bequeathed the phrase *Fear and Loathing* to the language.

The movie, which had its world film premiere at the Cannes Film Festival last night, stars a shaven-headed Johnny Depp in the Thompson role. Several attempts in the past to make

the film have failed partly because of its explicit passages relating to good and bad drug trips.

The making of this version has its own bizarre tales. Depp told yesterday how he had spent three months getting to know Thompson in the fortified compound where the latter lives. For five days he lived in Thompson's basement. Depp, a heavy smoker, only noticed after three days that there was a keg of gunpowder in the basement.

Describing his first meeting with Thompson (who has a small cameo in the film), Depp said: "I first met him in a bar. He came in with a cattle prod in one hand and a stun gun in the other. I went with him to his house. He had built a bomb in his kitchen. He took it outside and gave me a gun to fire at it. There was an 80ft fireball."

The film shows use and abuse of every drug from the era, as well as allusions to under-age sex, violence and intimidation. Yet some critics found its unrelenting lack of variation in tone and pace tedious. But the presence of the

popular actor and sex symbol Johnny Depp - who put in a good performance - should guarantee it wide distribution.

Yesterday, Terry Gilliam was asked whether he was worried that drugs in the Nineties have far more negative connotations than they had in 1971. He replied: "There's such hypocrisy about drugs. It's all shock horror. But as a world we're dependent on drugs. I drink very strong coffee. Prozac is acceptable."

"I think the drugs of the Sixties and Seventies were expansive drugs for better or worse. Yes it's dangerous, but driving a car is dangerous. We're so obsessed with avoiding danger and it can be avoiding life."

"It's nonsense the way people talk about drugs. People should talk about them openly ... I've been feeling, since the Eighties, that we've gone through such a constricted time when everything has kind of tightened up. Everybody is frightened to say what they feel, frightened to live in an extraordinary, outrageous way, and it's time to take off those chains."

Aliens and gut reactions

ALONGSIDE the Palme d'Or I would like to see a special award for La Grande Gaffe. The lifetime achievement award for a Cannes Gaffe belongs, of course, to former Conservative arts minister Stephen Dorrell, who came here a couple of years back and praised the then president of the festival jury, the exquisite actress Jeanne Moreau, as "a great Frenchman". He needed several bodyguards when he walked down the Croisette after that.

Heading the candidates so far this week is the beautiful actress - or, as Mr Dorrell might say, a splendid American chap, Winona Ryder. She told the world's press that a film "has to affect me gutturally. I have to feel it in my stomach".

Gets you right in the throat too, Winona.

Another favourite so far comes from the publicity material for *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. Several thousand packs were printed referring to that well-known extra-terrestrial beat poet, Allen Ginsberg.

May '68 and life mirrors art

ROMAN POLANSKI is in town and has been reminiscing of his time on the Cannes jury in 1968, a somewhat hairy year in France.

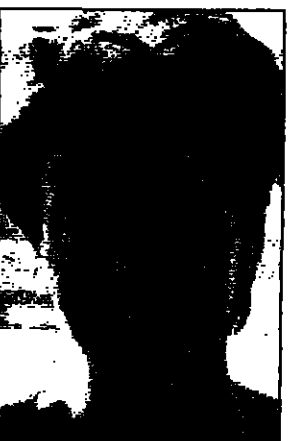
"The whole country was paralysed," he recalls. "And when the festival was stopped all those people were stuck in Cannes and they could not return. I remember that many of the guests were picked up by Sam Spiegel on his boat. It was like a second Exodus."

Those who did stay remained to fight it out, literally. "The stage in front of the screen was full of people fight-

CANNES DIARY

ing, those who wanted to stop the festival and those who said it must continue." Polanski says, "and the projection was going on on top of them. It was like the *Lanterna Magica* where there is the projection and life, both." Memories are made of this.

Quality assurance in Lebanon



THOSE who think the press can be beastly will have their minds change if they attend the daily press conferences for the stars at the Palais des Festivals. Here, the film critics of the world gather for an orgy of sycophancy.

For some reason the ladies from Lebanon manage to take sycophancy to realms hitherto unknown. Last year one said to Charlton Heston: "You are a god in Lebanon. You are my father, my mother, my sister and my brother." Heston was too gobsmacked to reply.

But Emma Thompson, (pictured above) is never lost for words.

Another Lebanese woman asked her this week if she was aware that her name on a film

was an assurance of quality. Thompson leaned forward to the woman and asked: "Where is it you come from, and how easy is it for me to move there?"

Prestige but few financial rewards

THE FESTIVAL climaxes with the Palme d'Or, one of the most prestigious prizes in world cinema.

But a gateway to riches it isn't. Last year's joint winners, Iran's *The Taste of Cherry*, according to figures in *Screen International*, has taken just £100,000 in the United States and has not been released yet in the UK.

Japan's *The Eel* has taken £500,000 in the UK and has not been released in the States.

Our own Kathy Burke was best actress but the film she starred in, Gary Oldman's *Ni By Mouth*, has taken less than £150,000 in the States and £500,000 in the UK.

The Ice Storm won special jury prize but didn't get a single Oscar nomination. But then, the president of this year's jury, Martin Scorsese, won the Palme d'Or for *Taxi Driver* in 1976. And he is still looking for his first Oscar.

In the national interests

TODAY the British pavilion here will stop all film business to show the FA Cup Final to all the temporary ex-pats.

Two nights ago the American pavilion set up an all ticket satellite showing of the last episode of *Seinfeld*.

What does that tell us about national differences? That Americans are mad. The live link was not on until nearly four in the morning local time.

David Lister



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Sky TV signs films deal with 'This Life' production firm

By Janine Gibson
Media Correspondent

THE production company behind *This Life* and *Between the Lines* has signed a major film deal with Rupert Murdoch's cable and satellite service, Sky Television.

World Productions, one of the country's most respected and successful independent drama producers, has guaranteed to develop three films for Sky's subscription movie channels in the *Sky Movies Originals* initiative. Sky will invest about \$2m (£1.2m) in each film produced, although other investors may be brought in on a project.

The films will be Sky's first venture into original film production. World, by contrast,

has a heavyweight track-record under its reclusive chairman, Tony Garnett, of making controversial and acclaimed dramas. Mr Garnett's credits range from the ground-breaking *Cathy Come Home*, through the black comedy *Cardiac Arrest*, to the mainstream BBC 1 series *Ballykissangel*.

The deal is something of a departure for Sky, which predominantly broadcasts US imports including *Beverly Hills 90210*, *The Simpsons*, *Star Trek: Voyager* and *The X-Files*. Recently, however, Sky's head of programming, James Baker, and Elisabeth Murdoch, general manager of broadcasting, have both put a high priority on securing "must see" shows for the main entertainment channel,

Sky One. They signed high-cost deals to secure the UK premières of new episodes of *ER* and *Friends*, and began to commission original programming from British producers.

Until now, Sky's original production efforts have been concentrated on factual series, such as last year's *Idris Uncovered* and the recent series *Hollywood Sex*, which Mr Baker and Ms Murdoch poached from ITV after the channel considered it too near the knuckle for a mainstream audience.

Mr Baker said of the World deal: "It's a first step for us, and they're a very good bunch to start with ... What they bring is such excellence in terms of script that people will think Sky isn't just making predictable stuff."

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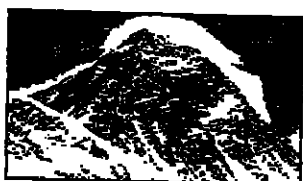
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Summit here we come – weather permitting

Today's Everest Diary comes from **Sundeep Dhillon** – one of Stephen Goodwin's climbing companions – at Base Camp as the Himalayan Kingdom Expedition prepares for its summit attempt

15 May, Summit Fever
WELL, it finally looks like the elusive weather window may be arriving. The forecast predicts a weak ridge of high pressure over the area, with the jet-stream at its weakest so far. This is predicted to last until 21 May when a trough is expected to pass through. Based on this assumption, and depending upon today's forecast, this is the provisional plan.



Everest Diary
Base Camp

16 May, Camp 1
Jim, Lily, Josie and myself will set off at 0500 for the four-hour journey to Camp 1 at the top of the Icefall (6,000m). The others will go directly to Camp 2 (Advanced Base Camp – ABC) at the end of the Western Cwm (6,400m) to join Dave Walsh, Rob Owen, and Steve who climbed up on Thursday.

17 May, Camp 2 (ABC)
The four of us from Camp 1 will move up to ABC, possibly taking tents with us. In the meantime the others will have a rest day there, while the three Sherpas go to Camp 3 and dig it out in preparation for us.

18 May, Camp 3
The nine Western climbers will move up the Lhotse Face to Camp 3 at 7,200m, taking up to six hours with three Sherpas in support. We will use oxygen while we sleep.

19 May, Camp 4
After an early start, we will set off for Camp 4 on the South Col at an altitude of 8,000m. We will be using oxygen, and will attempt to complete the six-to-eight hour journey by noon so that we have time to rest before commencing our summit bid the same evening. We will spend the rest of the day resting, drinking fluids, and attempting to eat. The temptation to stay awake and visit the east side of the col for a look down the awesome



Sherpas and oxygen are ready; the Himalayan Kingdom Expedition hopes to make its bid for the summit on 20 May

Photograph: S Lowe

Kangshung Face into Tibet, will be great, as will the view at sunset.

20 May, Summit Day?
We will aim to leave the South Col between 10pm and midnight. We will each have three,

three-litre bottles of oxygen. Using head torches, we will cross the col and climb a 500m gully to gain the crest of the South-East Ridge at 8,400m. Hopefully the sun will have risen by now, warming up our stiff, cold bodies.

The ridge leads to the South Summit (8,763m) steepening towards the top, and the true summit will be visible. Although it looks close, there is a narrow ridge in between, and halfway along this is the notorious Hillary Step, a steep

30ft groove. An easy final ridge leads to the summit (8,848m), marked with survey poles and prayer flags. We hope to arrive no later than 11am.

From the summit I will be able to look along the North-East Ridge to the high point I reached in 1996, just below the First Step, and if the weather is good, I will be able to see into the Tibetan plains and east across the magnificent peaks of the Himalaya to Kanchenjunga, my first Himalayan mountain, which I visited in 1990.

After the obligatory summit photographs, we will begin the descent to the col. Remembering that descent is often the most dangerous part of the climb, we will depart the summit by noon, in order that we can be safely back in our tents before darkness falls at around 6.30pm.

21 May, ABC

We will be keen to make another early start and get out of the "Death Zone". Although the weather is predicted to deteriorate, we should manage comfortably to descend to ABC.

22 May, Base Camp

There is still one more journey to make through the Icefall before we reach the safety of Base Camp.

This plan is entirely dependent on the weather and our own personal ability. None of the members of the team have been to the summit before, although some have been very high on the mountain. The nature of climbing Everest is such that there are only enough resources for a single summit attempt. If the weather is bad, we may be detained at ABC for a number of days.

The earliest anyone can expect to hear from us is 22 May, but do not get concerned if there is no contact for some days after this.

State schools forge links with private sector

By Judith Judd
Education Editor

PUPILS from state and independent schools will take part in 48 projects which aim to end "educational apartheid", the Government said yesterday.

Stephen Byers, the school standards minister, said that £350,000 of public money would be spent on the schemes, which will bring 11,000 pupils from private and state schools together to learn subjects ranging from cricket to maths.

In a speech last November Mr Byers announced that ministers were abandoning Labour's

traditional hostility to private schools. He offered them a new partnership in the crusade to raise standards. The party's manifesto before the last election spoke of the need to end "apartheid" between state and fee-paying schools.

Mr Byers insists that independent schools can learn from state schools as well as vice versa, particularly in areas such as new technology and the assessment of new pupils. He said that the Government's original offer of £250,000 had been increased by £100,000 after nearly 300 applications to take part in the scheme were received.

The Sutton Trust, which aims to provide educational opportunities for pupils from less-privileged backgrounds, is also spending £250,000 on the scheme.

In Wakefield, Queen Elizabeth Grammar School and Wakefield High School for Girls – both fee-paying – and three state secondary schools will offer able pupils extra classes, workshops and lectures and try to encourage more pupils to apply for Oxbridge. A few state sixth-formers sitting Oxbridge entrance may have some extra lessons in independent schools but there is no question of state pupils switching to a fee-paying school to be coached for Oxbridge. That, according to John McLeod, chief education officer for Wakefield metropolitan district council, which is co-ordinating the project, would be against the whole ethos of the scheme.

"Our project is based on total sharing and on the realisation that there are particular strengths in each school," he said. In London, Highgate and Channing schools, both private, will run a Saturday-morning scheme for able mathematicians with Gladesmore Community School in Haringey. Westminster School will offer help in maths for pupils and teachers at a nearby state secondary, the Grey Coat Hospital. Pupils from Merchant Taylors', an independent school, will help children at Greenfields primary in Hertfordshire with information technology.

Cricket coaching will also be on offer for the primary pupils. Girls from Manchester High School will help pupils from Medlock primary school with literacy at a homework club and staff from each school will teach in the other. Pupils and teachers from Bolton School (Girls) will work together with Daisy Hill (St James') primary school on a project which includes science, maths, geography and IT.

Mr Byers said that the scheme would bury old prejudices: "Old divisions have to be put to one side if we are serious about learning from what works well. Our commitment to raising standards is paramount. Independent and state schools have much to learn from each other. In the past there has been co-operation but rarely in the area of academic work."

Peter Lampl, chairman of the Sutton Trust, said it was considering funding a number of other schemes that had been submitted.

THE INDEPENDENT WIN

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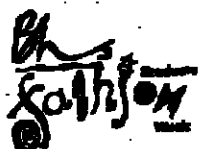
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This panda appears in *Pandas*, by Heather Angel, a former zoologist, whose book features a collection of rare photographs of the animals taken in their natural enclosures in China.

Ten-year jail term for rapist policeman

A POLICE officer was yesterday sentenced to 10 years in prison for two rapes and an indecent assault.

Mr Justice Hooper, sitting at Leeds Crown Court, told John Blott that pre-sentence reports had described him as "arrogant, egocentric and devoid of remorse". The judge said the report also said Blott was a dangerous man, especially to women, and there was a substantial risk that that would remain the case.

The judge said Blott, 33, a former Manchester City and Carlisle United goalkeeper, would not be eligible for parole until he had served five years of his sentence and he would recommend he should not be released until he had served at least two-thirds of it.

The judge said aggravating features of the case were the ages of the rape victims, who were 16 and 18. "You were a police officer, the victims trusted you and you abused that trust. You thought you could get away with what you were doing because you were a police officer."

Blott had been found guilty of two rapes and one indecent assault two weeks ago when a jury returned majority verdicts on the eighth day of the trial.

The police officer, of Redcar, Cleveland, was cleared of three charges of indecent assault. The judge has ordered one indictment of rape and three indecent assaults be laid on file.

The court heard that all the attacks took place after Blott met women during his work as a beat bobby in the Teesside area between 1993 and 1995.

His first victim was a 16-year-old college student whom he

met in August 1993 when he was 28. He arranged a date and took her to his home where he raped her twice.

Blott met his next victim in November 1994 while he was on duty outside a band concert at Middlesbrough Town Hall. He arranged to take the 22-year-old for a drink but he drove to his home and indecently assaulted her.

The judge said the woman had been left frightened and humiliated by Blott. She had agreed to go out with him because she knew he was a policeman and she had been brought up to trust the police.

The final attack happened in March 1995 when Blott raped an 18-year-old garage receptionist twice in his living room leaving her "stunned, drained and utterly disgusted". The judge told Blott the young woman's distress in giving evidence was obvious to everyone in court.

During the trial prosecution Aidan Marron QC, described Blott as a liar with a "monumental sexual appetite". He regarded himself as "some kind of sexual Olympian" who turned violent when women resisted his advances.

Blott told the jury he could not count the number of women he had been out with. He admitted describing himself as a "handsome man with a wonderful body" who women were attracted to.

He often picked up women while he was out on the beat, abusing his position of trust.

His victims initially failed to report the attacks because they feared they would never be believed against the word of a policeman.

M&S puts organic food back in shops

MARKS & Spencer, which stopped selling organic fruit and vegetables five years ago, is bringing it back in response to customer demand, it was announced yesterday.

Initially, only seven products, all sourced from overseas, will be available, restricted to stores around London. But the chain said that it was looking to expand the range and outlets, and to encourage more British farmers to go organic to meet demand.

M&S said that it would be holding an information day for its suppliers in the United Kingdom to discuss getting home-produced organic supplies. It takes two to three years for farms to become accredited as organic following the removal of chemicals and pesticides. Eighty

per cent of organic food now sold in Britain is imported.

The launch products will include four golden apples for £1.99, four tomatoes for £1.69 and a red pepper for £1.29. The other lines are red apples, avocados, baby tomatoes and potatoes. The store said it also hoped to include organic beef, pork and lamb.

The Soil Association, which sets the standards for organic farming in the UK, welcomed the initiative. Patrick Holden, its director, said: "We are delighted that, as one of the UK's leading retailers, Marks & Spencer is offering its customers organic fruit and vegetables and we look forward to seeing more M&S produce being grown by organic suppliers."

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Fondling, fraud and pay-offs — just another day in Camden

Will the council's answer to Nicola Horlick bring her boss to book? By Ann Treneman

ONLY a few years ago, Amanda Kelly and Steve Bundred were the best of friends. He was the new chief executive of Camden Council in north London and she was his hand-picked deputy. He was paid £100,000 a year. She received £83,000 and was one of the top women in local government.

It was all very New Labour, New Women, New Broom. But then something very old Labour occurred: they had a falling out and a pretty dramatic one at that. Now they are the worst of enemies. How do we know? Because, in that great Old Labour tradition, they are tearing each other to bits in public.

The setting is equally old-fashioned: an industrial tribunal in north London. There, for the past week, Amanda Kelly has been spilling the beans on fondling, fraud and huge pay-offs at Camden council.

The attack is ferocious and, because of Amanda Kelly's seniority, extremely damaging, especially at a council that prides itself on its equal opportunity policies. She accuses the council and Mr Bundred of sexual discrimination and victimisation. She says he treated her like a "naughty schoolgirl" and that the town hall has an "aggressive male culture".

She claims her job was put on the line over trivial matters while men who had committed serious sins were let off lightly. The heart of her case revolves around two letters from Mr Bundred last summer that threatened her job: "The tone resembles nothing so much as an irate headmaster wagging his finger at a naughty schoolgirl who has dared to disagree with him".

She is speaking from Room 11 of the Bloomsbury court building and the audience is a pretty rich one. First there is Ms Kelly who, when not at the tribunal, is still at work in her office that lies directly above Mr Bundred's. I figure she makes about £320 per day.

She looks a local government version of the City superwoman Nicola Horlick. She is one of the very few senior women to have brought a sex discrimination suit, a trend that is growing according to the Equal Opportunities Commission.

She did so because she couldn't face

herself in the mirror if she had just "slunk away". She is a 41-year-old mother of two who graduated from Oxford in philosophy and modern languages, trained as a solicitor and was hired as borough solicitor in 1993. She is ambitious and not afraid to say so.

In the second row at the tribunal sits Mr Bundred. He makes about £385 a day. He is flanked by various employees and department heads who come and go. Some of them will testify for him when the time comes.

He is a 46-year-old with one of those faces that is hard to remember and is best known as a left-winger from the days when he was on Ken Livingstone's GLC. He was appointed chief executive of Camden in 1996. During the tribunal, he passes the occasional Post-It note to his barrister.

one point, when asked if she had criticised a certain person, Amanda Kelly's voice rose: "At Camden everybody is criticising everyone else 24 hours a day!" Easy to see why the council applied for, and won, a gagging order. The High Court overturned it earlier this month.

Bernice Brookner, for one, is grateful. She lives in a hostel for the homeless in borough.

"It does my heart good to see them suffer!" she says. Bernice plans to come to the tribunal every day. Over the week Bernice heard a lot about how things happen in Camden. There was, for instance, the senior officer who had sexually assaulted Ms Kelly after drinking too much at an "awayday" strategy meeting in July 1994.

This involved "putting his arms around me and stroking my upper

"despite the fact a massive fraud had been perpetrated. Yet I was threatened with dismissal over matters I have yet to understand."

Ms Kelly believes Mr Bundred treated her more as a dogbody than a deputy. By last summer their relationship had deteriorated with Mr Bundred sending her two letters setting out his grievances. They are full of the kind of thing that has made local government infamous.

At one point he suggests she may need to be "re-energised" by seconding her to "another public body". Sub-headings within one letter include "Undermining of Me", "Belittling the Achievements of Others" and "Persistent Pursuit of Self-Interest Above Other Considerations".

Expect much more of the same over the next few weeks, although the cast of characters will be expanded on. Among them is Dennis Skinner, the son of the "Beast of Bolsover" MP. He is an assistant chief executive and Ms Kelly has previously claimed he was allowed to be "extremely rude" to her by Mr Bundred.

We will also hear more from council leader Richard Arthur who was drafted in late last year to try and resolve the battle. He offered "marriage guidance" in the form of a trip to Acas. Ms Kelly thought not.

Instead, she issued a list of 12 demands. They included that Mr Bundred apologise, that her branch be taken out of the chief executive's department, that she be treated like male officers and that she receive £5,000 compensation and costs. The council's lawyers declined, especially over a "finding of fault" against Mr Bundred. She was offered the post of director of leisure and community services, which would have meant a drop in salary.

It was an offer that she could — and did — refuse. And that's how some of the most highly paid people in Britain found themselves in Room 11 last week with the gloves off.

And there are more embarrassing battles to come with two further sexual discrimination cases against Camden due this year. I wonder what Blair's Babes will have to say about that.

Kelly, one of very few senior women to have brought a sex discrimination suit, couldn't have looked herself in the mirror if she had just "slunk away"

This is Elizabeth Slade QC. She is well respected and would make considerably more than £385 a day. Her questions are precise and, occasionally, deadly. To her right sits Ms Kelly's solicitor, Gillian Howard. In addition to being an expert on employment law, she provides the tribunal's fashion moments. One day last week she was wearing huge pinwheel black glitter earrings and a Moschino T-shirt whose front boasted "This T-shirt has no Sense of Humour".

The tribunal, which begins earlier this week, is scheduled to last two more, and Camden has admitted it will cost £300,000 to half a million pounds. If Amanda Kelly wins, that figure could double. Whatever the judgment, the council will lose big when it comes to their reputation. The picture that emerged last week was of an organisation that was at war, obsessed with petty rivalries, secrecy and pub gossip. At

body, breasts and right leg". A senior colleague, who was sitting across from her at the time, took no action and swore everyone to secrecy the next day. Ms Kelly later told him she considered the assault to be gross misconduct but he disagreed. "I am ashamed to admit that I did not have the stomach for the likely struggle," she said. The official was later made redundant and given a lump sum of £200,000.

Then there was Mr X, the "lazy" director who left work at Friday lunchtime and returned late Monday morning. He is said to have received only a written warning.

There was also the senior manager who was unaware that a massive fraud said to have involved computers and which cost the council more than £400,000 had taken place in his department. He received six months' severance pay. "He was given a nice easy way out of the council," said Ms Kelly.

Amanda Kelly, Camden's Oxford-educated deputy chief executive outside the tribunal building where she faces her boss, Steve Bundred, a former member of Ken Livingstone's GLC (right). Fighting the feminist cause is Kelly's solicitor, Gillian Howard (left)

Main picture: Neville Elder



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Paul Valley meets an aid worker whose parallel insights into the worlds of privilege and poverty have equipped her to monitor the impact of the West's policies on the poor

Princess fired up by a humanitarian cause

THERE are some things you have to keep quiet about if you are an aid worker. Like the fact that you are a princess. And not a patron of Save the Children kind of aid worker, but one who spends most days bumping up and down in the back of a pick-up truck for nine hours.

When 28-year-old Mulima Kufekisa Akapelwa returns to her homeland in Zambia the Lozi people call her Bomukwe, which means princess. Mulima, who arrives in Birmingham today for the G8 summit, is mildly embarrassed by the fact.

It is true, she admits, that her grandfather was heir to the paramount chieftom of an empire which stretched hundreds of miles from the border with Angola to the Copper Belt near the Congo. But her father was educated in the colonial era by Presbyterian missionaries and subsequently became, more prosaically, a veterinary officer.

More prosaically, Mulima feels. Which perhaps explains why she has moved into the field of aid and development. She heads a project sponsored



Children selling caterpillars and fish in a shanty town in Lusaka

sored by Zambia's Catholic bishops, funded from the United Kingdom by the Catholic aid agency Cafod, to monitor the effect of Third World debt on ordinary people.

It has been a considerable personal journey. The Lozi royal family is still a powerful, privileged and educated elite. It still exercises a residuum of its traditional judicial role. Though her father's work took the family away from the homeland to Livingstone,

where she was born, not far from Victoria Falls, she was sent to the best local school. When she went to university in Lusaka her parents refused to allow her to work during the periods in which her faculty was closed by funding cuts or during the riots provoked when subsidies on the basic food stuffs were cut at the behest of the International Monetary Fund.

It was the field work for her social sciences degree which changed everything. "We were taken off to the rural areas to collect data. Our supervisor would come every two or three weeks to collect our results and bring us vegetables." The life of the ordinary people came as a shock to the princess and her fellow students. After a further degree at Oxford, Mulima returned to Zambia. Her parallel insights into the worlds of privilege and poverty have brought her out of the world of aid into the more political arena of examining how the policies of the Western nations impact adversely on the world's poor.

"To find the money to repay the debts the rich world has forced on

us to restructure our economy. Fees have been introduced in health services and the result is an almost doubling of deaths among children under five," she said. "Education has effectively been privatised, driving out large numbers of pupils - particularly girls. Today only half of all Zambian children go to school."

But it is more than that. "The IMF policies of structural adjustment are taking a heavy toll among the poorest people," she said. "Privatisation has improved services in some cases. But... it is not a panacea. It has reduced poor farmers' ability to get their crops to market. And instead of delivering the promised foreign investment it has resulted in the asset-stripping of many public-owned businesses or their closure to make way for the goods of the foreign rivals who bought them."

She will say as much to the thousands of activists who will assemble in Birmingham this afternoon to throw a human chain around world leaders at the G8 summit which has Third World debt on its agenda.



Mulima Kufekisa Akapelwa: Embarrassed by her royal lineage

Photographs: Paul Valley

Zambians pay price of stability

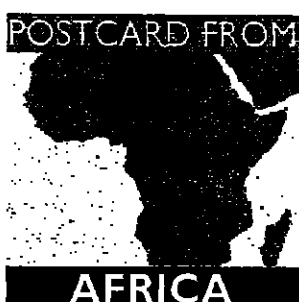
NO ONE could accuse the International Monetary Fund's representative in Zambia of not having a sense of humour. The walls of his office are covered with cartoons from local newspapers lambasting the IMF for its devastating impact on the life of ordinary Zambians.

After days of roughing it in the bush, where 85 per cent of people live below the poverty line, I had put on my suit and gone to see the money men. A breakfast meeting with the IMF was followed by others with a diplomat from one of the creditor countries, the World Bank and a top Zambian civil servant.

I had one basic question. How could the West justify an economic reform designed to maximise debt repayments at a time when thousands more people were dying?

About 25 per cent of Zambia's earnings goes on paying the interest on the debt. Health and other services have been cut to pay for it. Since the cuts were introduced, life expectancy has fallen from 54 to 42 and deaths among the under-fives has risen to 203 from 125 per thousand.

The IMF representative was nervous about an on-the-record conversation. The situation was too delicate for that, he said. I had no more luck at the embassy of one of the main cred-



Paul Valley

itor countries. Bilateral aid. I was told, off the record, had been suspended since a failed coup attempt last year. And there were one or two questions about human rights.

But a senior civil servant said "Whenever we address the issue - with commissions on corruption or human rights - they [the West] move the goalposts and demand something else."

According to the World Bank's man in Zambia, Gedion Njoko, the sufferings of the poor were nothing to do with the policy of Structural Adjustment. They were the results of poverty and poor economic management by the Zambian authorities. Hard choices had got inflation down from 300 per cent in 1991 to 20 per cent. The economy had stabilised. Now comes the second phase, in which it is hoped investment will arrive.

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Rupee falls but PM's popularity goes nuclear

By Peter Popham
in New Delhi

SOBERING slightly from its intoxicating bask at being a superpower - five underground nuclear tests conducted in three days - India yesterday began counting the cost of its new rulers' recklessness.

The rupee fell to an all-time low against the dollar and business confronted the implications of losing \$21bn (£13.5bn) of American money, through sanctions, to an economy already deeply stuck in recession. To restore the momentum which drove the economy to unprecedented successes in the past seven years would in any case have taken a concerted government assault on the many remaining areas of stagnation and backwardness. Now it will take a miracle.

The government, however, was still flying on a potent cocktail of international outrage and domestic satisfaction, and prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee decided to take another swig. In an interview with *India Today*, a weekly news magazine,

he confirmed that "India now has a big bomb and is now a nuclear weapons state". He added: "We will not hesitate to use the bomb in self-defence."

Mr Vajpayee did not clarify whether he meant defence against nuclear or conventional attack. Warning to his theme, he went on: "There is no question of India signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Command and control systems [for the nuclear weapons] are in place. The bomb is not intended for peaceful purposes. Celebrations are being organised up and down the country."

The prime minister's main objective appeared to be to continue moving the domestic political goalposts and thereby keep his opponents on the hop. All the major opposition parties have now endorsed the BJP-led government's stunning initiative, which provoked a euphoric reaction, at least among the urban middle class who had some inkling of what it was all about. On Thursday the Congress Party, which had been in two minds about how to react, finally bowed to



Demonstrators burn US and Japanese flags in New Delhi in protest at sanctions imposed by President Clinton in the aftermath of this week's Indian nuclear tests
Photograph: Ajit Kumar/AP

the popular mood when Sonia Gandhi declared that "the nuclear question is a national matter, not a partisan one. On this every Indian stands united".

Congress took pride in the fact that successive Congress governments had ensured, she went on, "that the country's nuclear capability remains up-to-date, so that our security is not compromised".

But Mr Vajpayee's party, the BJP, is an extremist party, and now that it has discovered how to drag the rest of the political class rightwards it cannot get enough of it. The so-called "ambiguists", the soggy middle of Indian politics, were content until Monday's explosions with the status quo, whereby India possessed nuclear weapons but neither owned up nor tested them. But on Tuesday they

woke up to find that their comfortably fuzzy political terrain had disappeared. Either they could sign up to the hard line of the BJP or do the unthinkable and join the invisibly small rump of the antis.

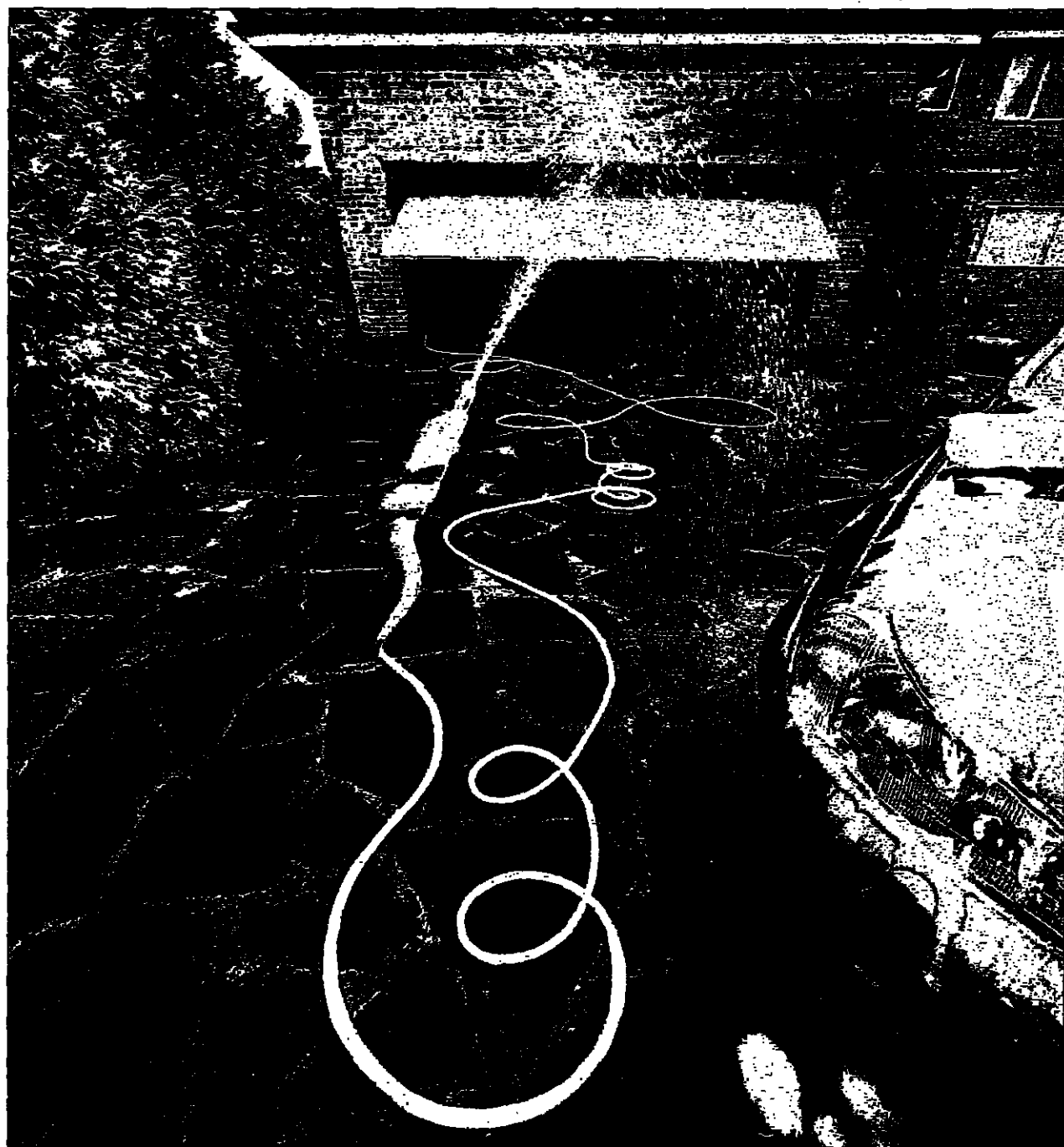
Now Mr Vajpayee has chosen to squeeze them some more. Optimists among the former ambiguists had their fingers crossed that Monday's tests would lead speedily to India's

signing the CTBT, which India has long denounced as a fraud and a trap. Wednesday's second-round of tests, carried out full in the teeth of international fury, made that much less likely. Now Mr Vajpayee appears to have hit the idea on the head once and for all. His opponents must either follow him to the cliff edge, or retreat to a middle ground that no longer exists.

The recklessness of the BJP government is all the more remarkable considering it is a minority government which only barely scrapes a majority in parliament thanks to the abstention of a key regional party. But a leader of the RSS, the patriotic paramilitary force which is the sinister parent body of the BJP (and which is believed to have had prior knowledge of the tests), revealed on Thursday that in 1996, the only previous occasion that the BJP held power, they were only prevented from carrying out nuclear tests when the United States got wind of their intentions and managed to contrive that they lost a crucial confidence vote in parliament. They were thus knocked out of power after a mere 13 days.

Meanwhile, in Islamabad speculation was rife that Pakistan would carry out nuclear tests of its own within a couple of days. To try to deflect the Pakistani government from this course of action, a high-level American delegation yesterday flew into the capital for talks.

Diplomatic sources said Pakistan should be able to extract a good price for exercising restraint, perhaps even securing the delivery of F16 fighter planes purchased from America 10 years ago which never arrived. However, the pressures on prime minister Nawaz Sharif to pick up the Indian gauntlet were intense. It is doubtful whether he will be able to withstand them.



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British experts search India for lost Jewish tribe

By Peter Popham

DESPITE their recent electoral success, nationalists have an uphill struggle in India: this is a country where myths of a Golden Age of harmony and racial homogeneity seem particularly ludicrous.

With its dozens of languages and profound differences in architecture, music, and diet, the world's second largest nation is fascinatingly heterogeneous.

One of the more improbable themes within this vast symphony of difference is the Jewish one. Groups claiming Jewish ancestry are dotted across the subcontinent. And now two British scholars using the latest DNA testing techniques have come to India to determine what genetic substance there might be to their beliefs.

Tudor Parfitt is a scholar of Jewish history at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London; Neil Bradman is a Jewish publisher who has made a second career, building on a postgraduate degree in biology, as a geneticist.

Outside a dilapidated synagogue in the town of Alibag, south of Bombay, spiritual home of what is claimed to be India's oldest Jewish community, they go about their work. Each volunteer is helped to fill out a questionnaire; Mr Parfitt snaps them with a Polaroid camera (the free snap is what induces them to take part).

And Mr Bradman runs a swab around the mouth of each and puts the sample in a test tube.

The Bene Israel, or Sons of Israel, were first identified as Jews at the end of the 18th century by a co-religionist from the large Jewish community in Cochín, Kerala.

The Bene Israel believe that their ancestors were Jewish traders, shipwrecked on these

shores 2,000 years ago. During their long sojourn in India they had lost most of their religious practices, but the Jew from Cochín was alerted to the truth by their notion of what was and was not kosher.

They had another Jewish custom, the hanging of mezuzahs, or encased prayer scrolls, on their doorposts for good luck. Many of the Bene Israel have now emigrated to Israel, but the mezuzah custom has been adopted by many in the majority Hindu community. Mr Parfitt and Mr Bradman are testing to discover to what extent the Jewish genetic legacy has been passed on, too.

Mr Parfitt and Mr Bradman are trying to gain a deeper understanding of population movements. Jews are a suitable case for study because they have a paternally inherited priesthood, the Kohanim, which means that the Y-chromosome, the long strand of DNA which contains the genetic formula for maleness, is passed from father to son practically unchanged for thousands of years. The existence of identical Y-chromosomes in groups hundreds or thousands of miles apart provides unshakeable proof of population movements.

The British pair are also interested in the Kukis, a tribe settled in the remote north-eastern state of Manipur. They call themselves Bene Manaseh, "the sons of Manaseh". Originally converted to Baptism, after the Second World War a prophet arose among them declaring that before they were Christians they were "something else" - namely, Jews.

It may turn out that, genetically, there is nothing in it. Indian bureaucracy has barred the pair from visiting the area. They will be back, however, with the tools that could yet prove that the Kukis' prophet got it right.

Kosovo's first step to peace

PRESIDENT Slobodan Milosevic and the leader of Kosovo's ethnic Albanians met for the first time yesterday, calling their United States-brokered talks an initial step toward peace in the province.

"It seems there is readiness to move ahead toward a peaceful political solution to the Kosovo issue," Mr Rugova said. In the province, heavy fighting and explosions were reported for a second day in the area south of Pristina, Kosovo's capital; there was no report of casualties. — AP, Belgrade

China holds Tibetan monks

CHINESE authorities arrested 15 Tibetan Buddhist monks after a demonstration in a remote monastery against Chinese rule in Tibet, a monitoring group said. The protests in the first two weeks of March at the Rongpo Rabten monastery occurred after Chinese officials tried to force its monks to denounce the Dalai Lama. Communist leaders in Tibet started the denunciation campaign against the Dalai Lama two years ago to purge his supporters from monasteries. — AP, Peking

Trans-sexual found stabbed

THE FIRST Honduran to have a sex change and to be legally recognised as a woman was found stabbed to death early Friday, along with a housekeeper. Sigfrida Shantall Pastor Arguilles, 50, a dentist, underwent sex-change surgery in the United States in 1976. For the next 21 years, she fought to be legally recognised as a woman. She won last November when the government identified her as a woman on her voter registration card. — AP, Tegucigalpa

Christian protest in Lahore

POLICE clashed with thousands of Christians calling for the repeal of blasphemy laws that led to the suicide of a Catholic bishop last week. Witnesses said police used tear gas and sticks to control a huge demonstration in the Punjabi capital, Lahore, against laws under which blasphemers can be executed. About 25 people were injured and more than a dozen were arrested. The Christian community called for Friday to be observed as a day of mourning to show their anger over the bishop's death and the laws he died trying to repeal. — Reuters, Lahore

Monastery's treasure trove

WORKERS renovating a monastery have found valuable antique books and treasures walled in by Franciscan monks to hide them from the communists. The trove was found at Gyongyoes, 50 miles east of Budapest. The most valuable book is the Bible printed in 1462 by Johann Fust, Johann Gutenberg's business partner. — AP, Budapest

Miss Universe for president

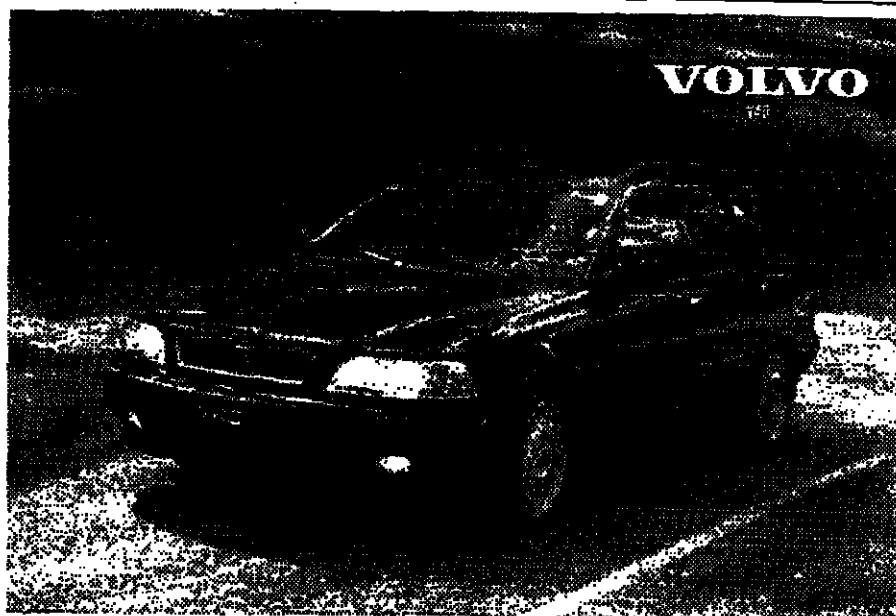
A MAJOR Venezuelan political party endorsed a former Miss Universe for president this week, a move she hopes will reverse the party's slide in the polls and catapult her to the nation's top office. Irene Saez, 36, mayor of a wealthy Caracas municipality, became the official candidate of the Social Christian COPEI Party, one of Latin America's oldest and best-known political movements. — AP, Caracas

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Ethiopians sent into an Israeli minefield

Immigrants are being sent to religious Jewish settlements, reports Patrick Cockburn

IN THE middle of the Jewish settlement of Ofra on the West Bank there are strange new arrivals. Some of the women wear flowery dresses and carry their babies on their backs. The men have skullcaps. They do not speak Hebrew. They are Falash Mura, Ethiopian Christians who say they were once Jews and plan to reconvert.

They arrived last month in Israel from Addis Ababa and the government immediately bussed 140 to Ofra, a settlement of religious Jews built on land captured by Israel in 1967.

"It is a provocation of the government done to show to the settlers that [Benjamin] Netanyahu wants settlements rather than the peace process," said Addisu Massala, the only Ethiopian member of the Knesset. "People are taken from the airport to the occupied territories. Everyday they ring me up to say they don't want to be there." He says the Ethiopians want to be in Tel Aviv or Haifa, where many have relatives and it is easier to get jobs.

The Ethiopians seem to sense that they have arrived in a political minefield. Dessalegne Gessese, 58, and fully Jewish, spent 29 years of his life as a tax inspector in Addis Ababa before he arrived in Ofra. At first he says he would prefer to live in Haifa on the coast, but after a conversation in Amharic with other Ethiopians he changes his mind and says he does not mind where he lives: "I don't care if it is Hebron or Gaza so long as I am here. I am a free Jew in my own country."

This is what the settlers of Ofra want to hear. Along with three other settlements in the occupied territories they are taking the Falash Mura in return for a government subsidy. They are also making an ideological point at the very moment Mr Netanyahu is in Washington, discussing a limited Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank. They are not only increasing the number of settlers, but demonstrating that, for the new immigrant, Ofra is as much part of the land of Israel as Tel Aviv. The Falash Mura themselves

It's a provocation. People are taken from the airport to the occupied territories

look cheerful. Most come originally from northern Ethiopia. Exactly when and why they converted to Christianity is not clear. Professor Stephen Kaplan, head of the African Studies Department at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, said: "Without being too cynical about it, up to 20 years ago there were clear advantages to being a Christian in Ethiopia; but in the last 20 years there has been a clear advantage in being Jewish." About 70,000 Ethiopians have come to Israel since 1984, but the Falash Mura, whose Jewish origin was questioned by

previous Israeli governments, remained behind. Most trekked from the north of the country and have lived near the Israeli embassy in Addis Ababa for the past seven years. Nobody knows how many more there are in the Ethiopian countryside.

Ami Bergman, who helped them with food and medical assistance on behalf of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, thinks there may be another 15,000 Falash Mura.

They are friendly people, with beaming smiles, who wave at anybody they do not know. Oren Tagat, an Ethiopian Jew already living in Israel, who is teaching the children basic Hebrew, says: "Their main problem is getting used to our food." Yaakov Alamo, also an immigrant from Ethiopia in the past and now a maintenance man at Ofra, said: "At first everything is a little hard bit, but they are an accommodating people." He admits that some of the newly arrived immigrants do not know they are in a settlement.

The settlers are sensitive to the accusation that they are manipulating the newly arrived Ethiopians. As we were asking Mr Gessese how he felt about being in a settlement in the occupied territories, Michal Finkel, a community co-ordinator in Ofra, said: "It is journalists asking questions who make the problems. He doesn't care where he is. It wasn't his decision to

come here." She says, rightly, that the government made the decision to send the Falash Mura to Ofra.

Yossi Shturm, spokesman for the Jewish Agency, which organised the immigration of the

Ethiopians, says only 1 or 2 per cent of them are being sent to the settlements. He said: "Most want to live in Israel because it is easier to get jobs and they are closer to their relatives." Their numbers are minus-

cule compared with the 155,000 Jewish settlers and 1.7 million Palestinians in the West Bank. But by sending the Falash Mura to Ofra, the Israeli government makes two points: it wants to increase the number of settlers on

the West Bank and it will treat it as part of Israel.

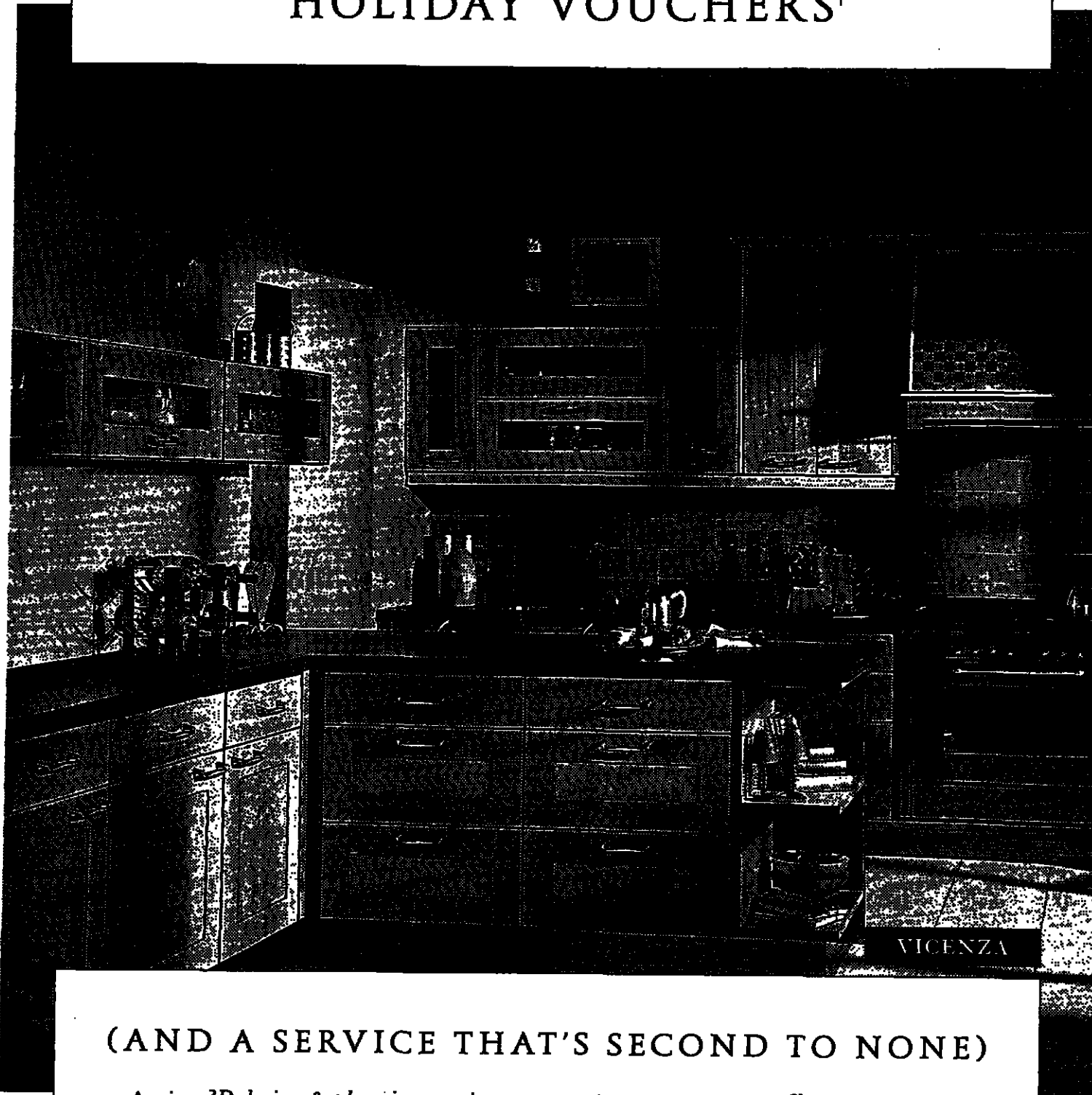
Addisu Massala says the Israeli government is exploiting the Falash Mura to further the ends of its "political ideology". He says they are in a uniquely

Falash Mura immigrants, who are being sent by the Israeli government to the disputed settlement of Ofra in the West Bank, built on land captured by Israel in 1967. Below, Dessalegne Gessese, newly arrived in Ofra, is glad to be anywhere in Israel. Photographs: Ariel Jerolimski



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French right forges pact against Le Pen

By John Lichfield
in Paris

AFTER seven weeks of ripping one another apart, the parties, factions and self-regarding personalities of the French right have agreed to form a new political alliance. The pact, to be confirmed by the grass roots, could mark a historic turning in the quarrelsome history of France's right wing, opening the way to the creation of a single French "conservative" party.

On the other hand, it might prove to be the starting-point for vicious faction-fighting. The proposed new grouping, to be called, simply, L'Alliance, will include both President Jacques Chirac's neo-Gaullist party, the RPR, and the five factions within the virtually defunct, centre-right federation, the UDF.

The declared intention is to unite all the forces on the French right who refuse to have anything to do with the xenophobic and ultra-right National Front (FN). It will be the first time the Gaullists have entered a formal alliance with other parties.

Previously, they would go no further than a loose electoral pact with the UDF. At first glance, the deal would be good news for the neo-Gaullists' founder, Mr Chirac. If the alliance prospers, it virtually guarantees that he will be the sole



Philippe Séguin: President of RPR in secret talks

candidate of the "traditional" right in the next presidential election in four years' time.

Both the UDF and the Gaullists have been severely weakened by the unauthorised local deals made by some of their provincial leaders with Jean-Marie Le Pen's FN following regional elections last March. Up to the middle of this week, it seemed that the traditional right would split into at least four warring groups: the Gaullists; a "centre" party; a Thatcherite "liberal" party; and a fast-growing new party called La Droite (the Right), which has declared its readiness to go into permanent partnership with the FN.

The agreement came out of the blue after secret negotiations between the RPR's president,

Philippe Séguin, and the UDF president, François Léotard. It cut the ground from under the feet of the two other principal figures in the UD: François Bayrou, who was just about to go it alone with a new party of the centre, and Alain Madelin, who was hoping to build a new formation of the anti-state, pro-market liberal right.

Neither man, to the fury of many of their supporters, feels strong enough to defy the new federation or confederation; they have indicated that they expect their factions to join L'Alliance. This is being referred to as a confederation, not a federation. The Alliance will not have its own bureaucratic structures and it will be presided over by its constituent party leaders in turn. By the end of this year, however, it hopes to have a common political programme.

That is when the fun will begin. How will the Alliance devise one programme to encompass the fiercely pro-European soft centre of Mr Bayrou, the pro-European but Thatcherite Mr Madelin and the contending liberal, pro-European and nationalist, anti-European factions of the Gaullists? The danger will be that, far from cutting the ground from under the FN and La Droite, a fuzzily pro-European Alliance will drive more Gaullists and others towards the far right.

Iranians march against dissident

CROWDS marched in the Iranian city of Isfahan yesterday to denounce backers of a dissident Muslim cleric and support the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

State radio said demonstrators carried banners condemning supporters of Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri as "internal elements of world arrogance [the West]". The radio did not report any clashes. Ayatollah Montazeri's supporters had urged

people to chant slogans demanding freedom of speech and thought.

Ayatollah Montazeri was placed under house arrest and prevented from teaching after he questioned Ayatollah Khamenei's authority in a speech in November.

The radio said, without explaining, that the Isfahan prayers were led by a cleric other than Ayatollah Jalaluddin Tabari, a moderate who usually leads Friday prayers.

An ally of President Mohammad Khatami, he has criticised hardline Islamists for taking the law into their own hands.

Ayatollah Khomeini, the country's late spiritual leader, dismissed Ayatollah Montazeri as his designated successor shortly before his death in 1989. Ayatollah Montazeri had criticised government policies, including treatment of political prisoners.

— Reuters

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Looters trapped in their own inferno



Rescuers and spectators with some of the remains laid out in front of the gutted department store

Photograph: AP

IT IS six hours since the fire went out, the clean-up job is well under way, and only fragments remain to be scooped up from the Yogya department store. The salvage workers have seen much worse than this, but they handle the pieces gingerly as they carry them out and drop them into charred trays at the top of the steps.

Here they are on public display: a trickle of people approach and sort through the pieces, looking for one that they recognise. A man helps out by holding them up for inspection, or turning them over with the end of a burned stick: a wrist, an elbow joint, something that might be a thigh or buttock, and a clenched pair of burned human hands.

On the wrist is an intact metal watch, its hands stopped for ever at the moment on Wednesday afternoon when Jakarta's people started to pay the price for the mayhem in which they have indulged this week.

Until yesterday morning, despite two days of looting, smashing and burning, there had been remarkably few confirmed casualties, no more than 25 dead in three days. But you

Richard Lloyd Parry in Jakarta sees the grisly aftermath of a free-for-all in which the lure of booty led to 200 deaths



Hospital workers in Jakarta with body bags. Most victims had been burnt beyond recognition Photograph: Reuters

cannot sack a city of Jakarta's size without destroying human lives along with it, as the horrible and ironic story of the Yogya department store shows.

As many as 200 people died here on Wednesday, most of them looters trapped by their own fire.

By yesterday afternoon they had pieced together only 88 at the Cipto Mangunkusumo Hospital in central Jakarta.

Fifteen of them were identifiable. Most of the rest have been reduced to the lumps of flesh, bone and jewellery in the black trays.

The tragedy here began no differently from thousands of other acts of looting all over the city. All through Wednesday morning mobs of poor Jakartans assembled spontaneously and began their pillage in dozens of neighbourhoods all over the city.

There was a dangerous, skittish atmosphere among the crowd, which was seized by sudden panics and surges. After milling aimlessly in the middle of the street, a cry would go up and hundreds of people would sprint in one direction, either towards a new target or away from an imagined threat.

They reached the Yogya department store in the early afternoon, by which time several of the adjoining businesses had brought down their shutters for the day.

At 2.30pm, according to local people, they began pelting the plate glass windows of the ground-floor McDonald's with stones.

At 3pm they forced their way in and began looting.

"They brought the stuff out, put it down in the yard and then went back in for more," said Haji Eko, who worked in the adjacent Bank CICI, now a gutted shell. "They had CDs, music centres clothes, textiles."

The fires were started in the burger restaurant and in the entrance hall of the department store - the yellow arches of the McDonald's sign, distorted by the heat, drip down the outer wall like an image from Salvador Dali.

But as the fire burned on the lower floors, there were large numbers of people upstairs, in the third-floor supermarket and electrical store, the fourth-floor food hall and bookshop, and the sixth-floor sports department.

The scenes inside, after the looters realised that they were trapped, can scarcely be imagined.

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Chinese suffer for their success as mobs target the 'Jews of the East'

By Stephen Vines
in Hong Kong

CHINESE families are flocking to Indonesian airports, desperate to flee as their shops and homes are looted and burned to the ground. Their fears are understandable - being an ethnic Chinese in Indonesia today is to be in a state of mortal danger.

Yet again, the Chinese are the scapegoat for the problems of a South-East Asian nation in trouble. In Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, tiny Brunei and Vietnam - where they provided the backbone of the "boat people" exodus - Chinese communities have been subject to persecution. Partly it is because they are different, partly because they are successful and, in some cases, because they have acted as revolutionaries in their adopted countries.

The comparison with the European Jews is striking. Ironically it was in Thailand, where the Chinese are most assimilated, that the term "Jews of the East" was coined by King Vajiravudh in a vitriolic racist essay written in 1915.

In Indonesia, where the Chinese are no more than 3 per cent of the population, the well-established Chinese community has provided the scapegoat both for popular discontent and the cynical manipulation of governments seeking to deflect the blame for their mismanagement.

In the present crisis the government of President Suharto has done little to protect the Chinese. Although he is closely associated with a number of prominent Chinese businessmen it is suspected that he would be content to let the Chinese bear the brunt of popular discontent with his regime.

Historically, the problems in Indonesia were exacerbated by

Peking in 1959, which launched a campaign to repatriate its compatriots. Suffering discrimination in their adopted home, many Indonesian Chinese answered the call, leaving with little more than the clothes they were wearing. The wave of immigration reinforced the feeling that the Chinese were not really Indonesian.

The 1965 coup which brought President Suharto to power made matters worse as the Chinese were seen as allies of the local Communist Party. Some were indeed Communists but most were not, though they were not spared in the bloodbath which followed.

The community has provided the scapegoat for popular discontent

Anti-Chinese sentiment peaked in 1966, particularly in northern Sumatra, where it is again strong today. No one knows how many Chinese were killed in rioting but the massacres have left a lasting impression on the community, which fears that history will repeat itself.

In Indonesia, as elsewhere in South-East Asia, the Chinese have changed their names to blend in with the rest of the population. But everyone seems to know who is Chinese. The high-profile businessmen are particularly well known for being Chinese. Not only do they give the impression that the whole community is rich, but their businesses tend to be concentrated in retailing and banking, sectors which have the most direct connection with the public at large.

jump out of the windows. Only five of them were carried away alive, all of them unconscious or with broken limbs.

Apart from looters, the victims seem to have included shopkeepers protecting their businesses, and ordinary shoppers caught in the riot.

Three sisters and a brother lingered weeping outside the shopping centres yesterday afternoon, looking for some sign of their youngest sister, Chaerunisa, who went shopping on Wednesday and never came home.

"I got back with my husband from Saudi Arabia last week," said her sister, Fauziah, "and my mother told her to go out and buy some Arab cheese for us to eat. Later the neighbours told us that there is trouble in the department store."

"We ran there straight away, but the fire was so big. We waited all night, but no one could escape from it. She was 17, just a young girl, and I had seen her for just one day after two years away from her."

The fire burned until 9am yesterday.

Mobs in at least three other places in Jakarta yesterday set fire to other shopping centres, which serve as something of a symbol of President Suharto's Indonesia.

During the years of high growth which ended last year, the glass-covered edifices went up all over Jakarta.

Inside, the rich minority spent their wealth. But most Indonesians could do no more than press their noses against the mirrored glass. This week, they forced their way inside.

"Of course I blame the rioters," said Fauziah. "But they are angry with the government and with the politicians. Their anger spilled on to the department store."

"If we had a government that listened to us, there wouldn't be a riot like this. More people will die, more like my sister, unless Suharto goes."

In Malaysia, discrimination against Chinese business is institutionalised in policies which give preference to the supposedly indigenous people, although it is questionable whether the majority Malay population is that much more indigenous than the Chinese. Chinese businesses have to take in indigenous partners and are in effect barred from obtaining most government contracts. The government is now reconsidering this policy, which appears to be hampering economic growth.

Both Thailand and the Philippines were early advocates of discrimination against Chinese business activity. Yet this has not prevented Chinese businessmen from emerging as the most powerful players in the business world of these countries. In the Philippines, wealthy Chinese are frequently the targets of kidnappers. Opponents of one candidate in the recent presidential election tried to get him banned on grounds of his Chinese ancestry.

The Chinese have been denied citizenship rights in Brunei, although some prominent members of the community have got round the ban by converting to Islam. The much despised Burmese regime, too, often tries its hand at anti-Chinese racism.

Unpopular regimes have some reason to fear the Chinese because they have often led revolutionary movements in Asia.

Jose Rizal, hero of the Philippine independence movement, was primarily of Chinese descent. The leadership of the Communist Party in Malaysia was predominantly Chinese and the leaders of the movement which split the Malaysian federation were Chinese. Indeed, they created a predominantly Chinese state next door in the form of Singapore.

Indonesians fear approach of 'day the Earth shakes'

David Foll, who spent a year in Java studying music, writes of his anxiety for a people and a country he came to love

IN THE early Nineties I lived for nine months in the city of Solo, central Java, where I was studying classical Javanese music. I grew to love the Indonesian people for their grace, gentleness and almost universal kindness.

During my last weeks there, I witnessed the campaigns for the 1992 elections. The complexities of Indonesian politics had been reduced to a choice among three political parties (the government party and the small Muslim and Democratic parties), three numbers (1, 2 or 3), three symbols (a banyan tree, a buffalo head and a star) and three colours (yellow, red and green).

There was never any doubt about who would win. Quotas of votes were set for village heads to return if they wanted any share in development projects, and all civil servants had to vote for the government party, which received "only" 68 per cent of the vote.

On specially designated days one party was allowed to rally in the area. Supporters, mostly young, put on T-shirts of the correct colour, piled on to motorbikes (sometimes three at a time) or pick-up trucks and massed aggressively in the streets.

"Stay clear," my landlady told me. "Don't go out. If anyone asks you which party you support, you do like this." And a mask fell over her usually animated face, which was instantly inoffensive and blank, with only the vaguest of smiles.

Travelling in a minibus from Solo to Yogyakarta, I was caught in a succession of such rallies. We repeatedly had to stop at the roadside to let what seemed a tribal army pass us, chanting slogans, waving ban-

ners and thumping on the roof and sides of our minibus, which, thank God, had tinted windows so that the foreigners inside could not be seen.

What impressed me most was the pointlessness of these events, as well as the explosive, barely contained energies of these charming people who had become a monster with many heads. They were profoundly frustrated and they had no channel for their political aspirations.

Always present beneath the smiles was this sense of fear, of the state, the army, the police, of anyone in authority. But there was a deeper fear, too: that Indonesia would have to go again through the nightmare of 1965-6, when perhaps half a

million people were killed after a failed coup against Sukarno, the first president of independent Indonesia. Communist Party members were hunted down and butchered, along with Chinese Indonesians (Sukarno had aligned himself with Peking, and anyway the Chinese minority always get it in the neck when there is trouble) plus, in the fields, those poor farmers who had joined the campaign for land reform. Suharto rose to his pre-eminent position through this bloodshed.

Suharto controlled the forms of democracy like a Javanese puppeteer; they were as insubstantial as shadows

No one would talk willingly about this time. As a guest in their country I never wanted to press my friends about it. But Javanese *dalang*, or shadow puppeteer, until they were as insubstantial as shadows.

I went back to Java over Christmas last year. The Jakarta skyline was changed beyond recognition. Huge shopping malls with skyscraper hotels rearing out of them were everywhere. Inside were international designer shops and freezing air-conditioned lobbies. Whatever happens, I said to a friend in Jakarta, they will never jeopardise this. Like the absolutist Javanese kings of old, Suharto seemed to have fulfilled his role of Father of the Nation, and his kingdom was peaceful and wealthy. In return he claimed the age-old prerog-

atives of unquestioned power, lavish respect and huge personal wealth.

But by Christmas this prosperity was tottering. Only a few could afford the luxuries. Then came the forest fires in Sumatra and Kalimantan, partly caused by the effects of El Nino, but partly by First Family business activities - timber, plantations, and, crazily, the reclamation of mangrove swamps for rice fields.

Now there is appalling public disorder. The *wahyu*, the divine radiance of powerful kings, has deserted Suharto. With it gone, there is no reason to support him any more. But it is difficult to see who the *wahyu* will pass to, since Suharto has disposed of all credible opposition.

It is heartbreaking to watch on television such scenes of destruction in a city I love. Yesterday I phoned friends in Solo. Even in that gracious city a department store, five minutes from my old house, had been torched.

I fear for the lives of Chinese friends. I can only hope that the high walls and metal gateways with which they surround their homes will protect them.

so, Australia has attracted scorn over its willingness to turn a blind eye to Indonesia's human rights abuses in East Timor.

If the riots spin further out of control, and more anti-Suharto demonstrators are shot dead, Australia's stand will be put to the gravest test. Critics have called on Mr Howard's government to accept that Indonesia is in the throes of political change and to encourage the emergence of democracy.

Marcus Einfeld, a judge and former president of Australia's human rights commission, said on Thursday: "When democracy does come... what will [Indonesians and East Timorese] think of Australia which... stood by in silence for over 20 years as the poor grew poorer and thousands of East Timorese were murdered, raped and oppressed?"

Anxious Australia watches northern neighbour unravel

By Robert Milliken
in Sydney

AUSTRALIA has been shaken by the crisis in Indonesia, its nearest northern neighbour. Once feared as a possible invader, Indonesia has more recently become Australia's closest defence partner in Asia. Now, the apparent death throes of the Suharto regime have reawakened old anxieties about turbulence on its doorstep.

Governments in Canberra have spent the best part of a decade forming close ties with President Suharto's regime, culminating in a security treaty that the two countries signed in late 1995. Indonesia is Australia's second biggest export market in South-East Asia. When Indonesia's economy started collapsing last year, Australia



John Howard: 'Deeply disturbed' by the riots

contributed A\$1bn towards an International Monetary Fund rescue package.

The deaths of students and the rioting have sent shudders through Canberra, provoking deep concern, particularly about the role of the military if

President Suharto is forced out. General John Baker, chief of Australia's defence forces, said on Thursday that the outcome of the Indonesian crisis was more significant to Australia's strategic interests than the Vietnam war. John Howard, the Prime Minister, said he was "deeply disturbed" by the riots and called on the Indonesian security forces to show restraint.

Australia's anxiety reflects its attempt over the past 30 years to come to grips with its position as a democratic country of 18 million living next door to the world's fourth most populous country and biggest Islamic state. In their bid to dispel fears of "invasion from the north", Canberra's policy-makers have gone out of their way to turn a country once seen as an enemy into a favoured friend. In doing



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President Suharto, arriving in Jakarta after cutting short a visit to Egypt, is greeted by vice-president Jusuf Habibie. Photograph: Enny Nuraheni/Reuters

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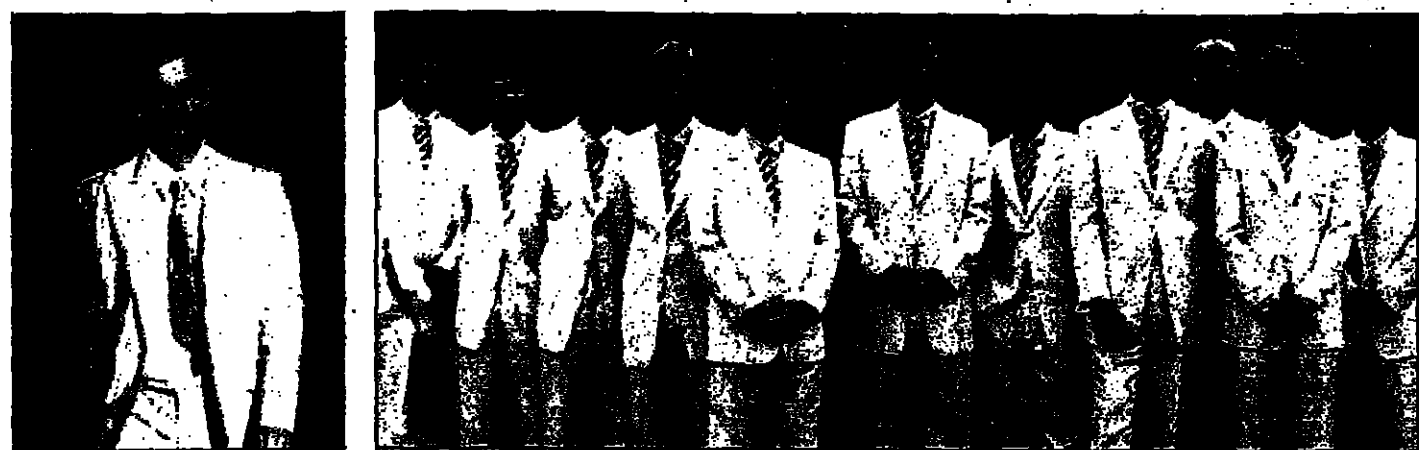
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The fashion victims of football

What should a boy wear for the Cup Final? Not Hugo Boss, for sure. By Tamsin Blanchard



Katharine Hammett thinks she knows the best way a man should dress (left) and it isn't how Liverpool did it in 1996 (above)

THIS afternoon when Arsenal and Newcastle go for a walkabout on the Wembley pitch before the big match, they'll be wearing Hugo Boss suits, both sides united in their passion for one designer label.

Although most supporters couldn't give a flying football about the designer name on their team's inside jacket pockets, the dressing of football stars has become big business for fashion companies. To have a football player endorse your clothes is worth more in advertising revenue than all the chisel-jawed models in Milan.

Giorgio Armani scored a hat-trick when he had the bright idea of employing Liverpool goalie David James to show off his magnificent thighs wearing nothing more than a pair of briefs. However, the designer was given a yellow card when he dressed the entire team for the FA Cup final in 1996.

What singles out the match in the memories of the most die-hard fans were the official team suits that Liverpool wore before the match. "David James looked superb in his, obviously because he was modelling for Armani anyway," argues one Liverpool fan. "It depended who was wearing them." Another fan has still not got over the shock: "I held my face in my hands in shame. From the moment they

stepped out in those suits, I knew we were going to lose."

Whichever side you're on, footballers' suits can be an emotive – and all too often comic – subject. The days when the team went down to their local Bartons to be fitted for a smart suit for the big day are over. Footballers have become the menswear equivalent of Hollywood movie stars at the Oscars, prey to big corporate designers who can supply suits free of charge. Hugo Boss can no doubt throw in a few dozen boxes of aftershave, and a pair of boxers as a sweetener for Newcastle manager Kenny Dalglish. But a team that is worth as much as Arsenal can well afford to buy their own suits. And it's time they supported local talent.

One local designer is Katharine Hammett. Her menswear is already popular with the football fraternity, but who better to design the Gunners kit than a designer who lives – and works – within spitting distance of the club? She could do a great line in *Reservoir Dogs* style slim-line two-pieces for the boys (although she would have to remember they don't like flat front trousers because they sit too tightly on their thighs).

Likewise, Charlie Allen, the Highbury-based tailor who was born only 100 yards from the

ground and still lives 200 yards from it. "It's outrageous. Both sides wearing Hugo Boss! Why can't they pick an English designer?" he asks. Needless to say, he is an Arsenal supporter and will be closing his shop at 3pm this afternoon. "No wonder the Germans beat us at football. We're wearing their suits."

Despite the fact that the suits would have been required at short notice, Mr Allen is adamant that he could have supplied the team with their own bespoke suit at the reduced price of £750 each – including shirt and tie. "It has to be a suit. They're wearing dark grey, but I'd put them in red and black shot mohair – Zegna fabric – very light and half-lined," says Allen. They would also wear a black shirt with a black tie shot with red stripes that you could see from a distance. The suit would be single-breasted, three buttoned and with flat-fronted trousers. "Instead, they've gone for a name," says Allen.

Small companies, however local, simply cannot compete. When Nigel Curtis, the British menswear designer dressed Manchester United for the 1996 final, he made thirty suits for the team, the subs, and their manager, Alex Ferguson.

"It's a prestigious thing to do. The fact that you've suited up the

most famous footballers in the world is worth a lot." However, Curtis was not paid for the privilege. He split the costs with the Manchester menswear shop, Garcon, which got the business in the first place through regular customers Andy Cole, Paul Ince, and Ryan Giggs. Likewise, Newcastle may not have been loyal to a local designer, but Kenny Dalglish put in a call to the team's favourite suit shop, Cruise Flannels in the Toon's equivalent of Bond Street.

Nigel Cabourn, the Geordie designer who lives in a windmill in the centre of the city might have loved the chance to dress the boys, but the task went to Boss. Navy suits and cream shirts with cutaway collar were shipped over from Germany and although the team is not officially sponsored by the label, they are happy to be as helpful and generous as they can.

Locally, however, it is Cruise that will benefit from the increase in business. Designer menswear is worth in excess of £446 million in the UK and Cruise will be getting their fair share.

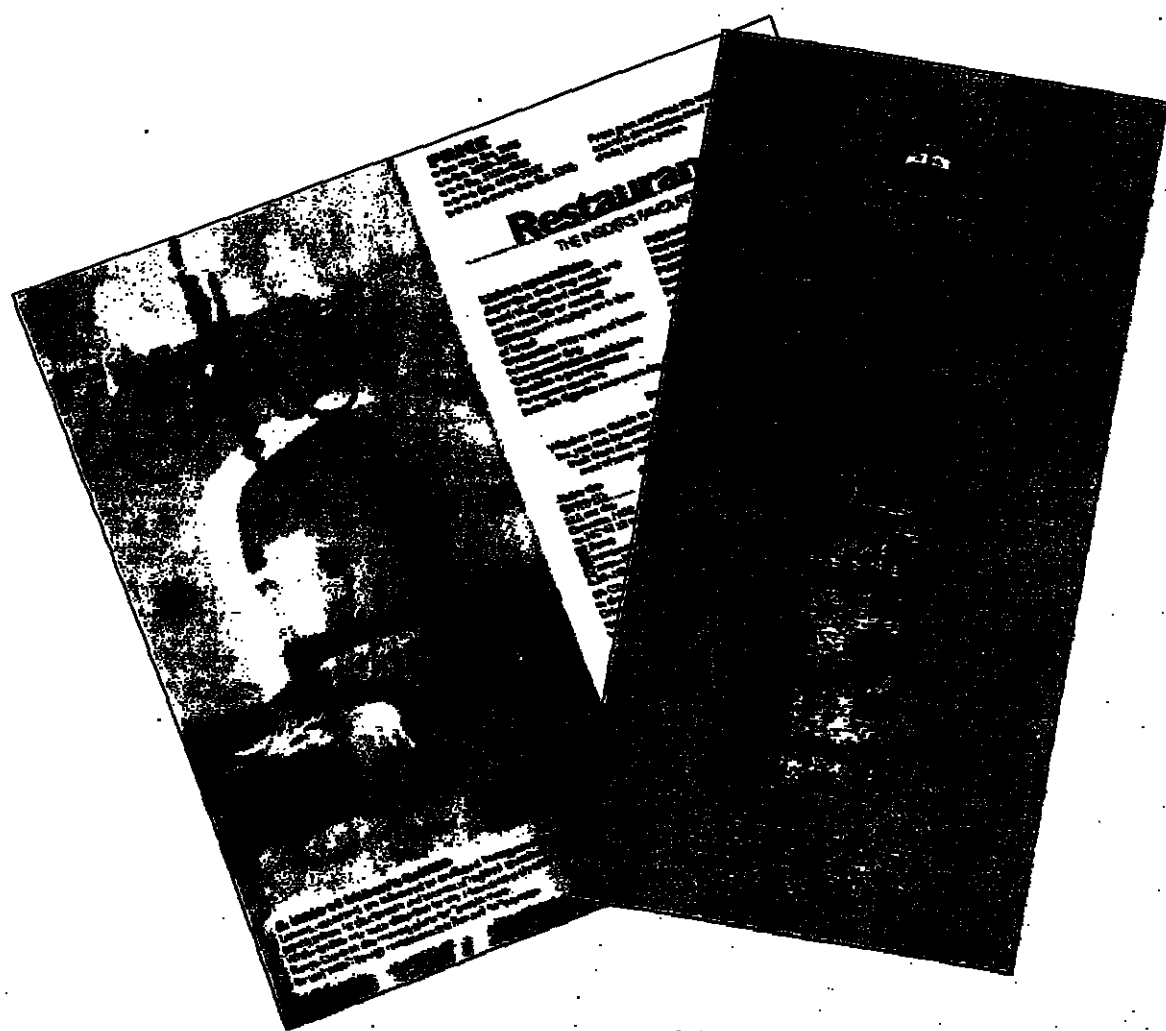
Come the World Cup however, Germany can keep their Hugo Boss. England have gone for some of the best made suits in the world. They're British and they're by Paul Smith.



Arsenal's Steve Bould (left) and David Seaman model Hugo Boss suits Photograph: Michael Stephens/PA

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FAITH AND REASON

Why Tony, Bill and Helmut can't ignore the chain gang

Politicians and archbishops must not turn their back on the scandal of Third World debt says Paul Handley, editor of the Church Times

THE Jubilee 2000 protesters who plan to form the six-mile-long human chain round the G8 summit in Birmingham at 3 o'clock this afternoon will have to stretch their arms just that little bit longer. Sadly, two of their supporters, George Carey and Basil Hume, have somebody else to support at precisely the same time. I hope Arsenal and Newcastle United are grateful. I don't suppose Malawi, Bangladesh, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Bolivia and the rest of the teams at the bottom of the global division will be.

In one sense, it won't matter. The two church leaders have said enough about Third World debt to show that their hearts are in the right place, and the Jubilee 2000 organisers need the Churches' support too much to start publicly knocking their leaders. And clearly, the human chain is, in the end, just a bit of symbolism. Still, what a missed opportunity to show the country what real sacrifice means.

So, the Jubilee 2000 campaign starts the afternoon two-nil down. Or rather, ten-nil down, since the G8 leaders aren't actually going to be inside the Birmingham International Convention Centre today. Security considerations

have made the Foreign Office a bit cagey, but it looks as if Bill Clinton, Helmut Kohl et al will have departed earlier for a retreat in a stately home in Shropshire, returning to Birmingham late in the day, just in time not to hear Nigel Kennedy play for them.

It will be like a gigantic game of "The farmer's in his den", with one exception: the farmer won't be in his den. Talk about symbolic: it's an experience that will be familiar to the nations which bear the burden of the heaviest debt – calling on their creditors to ask for leniency and finding them out for the day.

Despite all this, the protesters who do turn up need not worry unduly. If the numbers expected turn up, the final score will be 35,000-10. And they have already had their effect. The matter of Third World debt is now firmly on the summit agenda, due, in large part, to their efforts

special treatment for countries recovering from war. If agreed, these proposals would, in effect, turn a 400m hurdles into a 100m hurdles: helpful, positive, reasonable – but not yet the Millennium gesture the campaigners are calling for. So, how do we explain the discrepancy? Were the politics not, in the end, good enough?

Partly, of course, it comes down to the protesters' need to oversimplify in order to gather support.

Ending debt by the year 2000 is just such a strong concept; suggesting a reasonable improvement in the IMF/World Bank requirements for debtor countries isn't. Imagine the campaigners taking to the street "What do we want? Gradual improvements. When do we want them? In due course."

Turning debt into a black and white (or black and red) issue has meant that

population, and just plain poverty.

To rub salt into the wounds, the Western creditors have, in the past, demanded that some or all of these be put right before rescheduling (not cancelling, mind) those countries' debt.

The idea that the servicing of this debt might itself be the chief reason for some of these troubles seems genuinely not to have occurred to anyone until relatively recently – except, of course, to the debtor countries themselves, but who listened to them?

We were told, or we assumed, that the debt was just a natural part of world economics; we were told that the poorer countries were being helped by the rescheduling programmes; we were told that the sums involved might destabilise the high street banks. We weren't told about the blossoming interest; nor about the 21 million children who will die before 2000 from preventable diseases or famine.

This is why people in the West are angry.

We feel we've been duped: that while we were congratulating ourselves on how much we raised for charity, somebody somewhere was siphoning back nine times as much in our names. Without realising it, we have been guilty of injustice towards the most vulnerable peoples in the world. We find ourselves in need of forgiveness; and as our Lord taught us, our own forgiveness is linked (chained) to our readiness to forgive our debtors. Half the world in physical peril, the other half in peril spiritually: seen in this light, spending a dull afternoon in Birmingham is a small price to pay.

This is what the world leaders – and maybe one or two church leaders – still have to appreciate.

Turning debt into a black and white issue has meant that politicians have had to take notice, and they, in turn, have put pressure on the financiers

(and not, as the *Guardian* put it yesterday, Tony Blair's). Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, this week called it "good politics".

Don't expect a revolution. Short was hinting: the matrix of international agreements surrounding IMF and World Bank debt repayments was too complex to dismantle without a big upset; but, encouraged by the campaign, Britain would be pressing for a serious relaxation of the conditions including, for instance,

politicians interested only in keeping their electors happy have had to take notice, and they, in turn, have put pressure on the financiers.

But if we admit to oversimplification, we ought also to acknowledge the corresponding process of obfuscation that went on before. High infant mortality, poor education, low investment and absent infrastructures in the poorest nations have been blamed, variously, on poor government, corruption, natural disasters, over-

A WEEK IN RADIO

THERE ARE so many ways of damaging children - we bully them, we coddle them, we spoil them and we flatter them. We wreck their confidence, we fill their heads with stupid fantasies, we give them our own terrible examples to follow, or we leave them alone in front of the television. We even tell them what life is really like.

The difficulty of knowing which things hurt children was brought home in the first part of *Let the Rumpus Begin!* (Radio 4, Monday to Friday), a series in which Michael Rosen discussed the subversiveness of children's literature.

On Monday, he discussed the book from which the title is derived (though it is a misquotation): Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*. This much-loved nursery classic, about a small boy who reacts to a row with his mother by sailing away to a land full of monsters, whom he tames by the power of his eyes, was condemned on publication as terrifying and "psychologically damaging".

Rosen had dug up some brilliant examples of child-centred idiocy. Among other things, it was suggested that because Max is sent to bed without any supper, the book might make sensitive children afraid of being deprived of basic sustenance.

A fascinating programme, but, oddly, it passed without comment over the book's most disturbing moment: as Max prepares to sail back home, the wild things implore him to stay with the words "We'll eat you up - we love you so!" Even as an adult, I am left feeling slightly queasy by that line, which introduces a note of threat into love and security.

The idea that a picture book can hurt children was put into some sort of perspective by *Suffer the Little Children* (Radio 4, Tuesday), Gail Foley's report on the public inquiry into sexual abuse of children in state-run homes in North Wales.

Foley mentioned early on that the inquiry has received little attention in the press, and that is a scandal. But this programme wasn't the best antidote. It wanted the listener to be shocked but was unwilling to be shocking. To be fair, I cannot imagine what a programme worthy of this subject would be like. Perhaps cruelty to children is a topic that can't be looked at directly.

In *Voices* (Radio 3, Tuesday), the tenor far Bostridge sang Britten's "canticle" *Abraham and Isaac* together with the boy soprano Edward Downes.

At one point, inviting his son to be sacrificed, Abraham sings: "Come hither my child, thou art so sweet, Thou must be bound both hands and feet." This image of murderous love was more piercing than anything achieved by *Suffer the Little Children*: a sideways glance that revealed more than the hard, straight stare.

Unhappy families

Deborah Moggach reveals her ongoing fascination with the collapse of the family in the new serial 'Close Relations'. By Jasper Rees

NO WRITER is quite so ecological as Deborah Moggach. She has two dramas on television this year, a saga on each popular channel. For *Seesaw*, which was on ITV in March, she recycled the script from her own novel, *Close Relations*, which begins on BBC1 tomorrow, she reused as a novel once she had completed the script. And yet for all her careful husbanding of resources - 12 novels and five television dramas - Moggach is not quite the household name she might be.

This may be because no one knows quite where to place her. Even in appearance, she sends out a mess of signals. One year shy of 50, she is gawky tall, like a ball-breaking Virago novelist. But the scrappy bohemian mane is that airport bestseller's hair? In fact, she's somewhere in the middle. The boarding-school laugh and the posh vowels mark her out as the metropolitan cousin of Joanna Trollope, and that is roughly where you find her on the literary map, neatly bisecting Booker and bonkbuster.

Moggach's subject is the rickety edifice we call the family, which she comes at armed with both a wrecking ball and an insatiable curiosity to note the particular way it collapses. Moggach may as well have taken Tolstoy's dictum that no two unhappy families are alike as the epigraph to her career. The tension in her work derives from her inability to decide whether or not the family as an institution is in inexorable crisis. "I've got two opinions. One is that a family is a fragile thing that has been blasted to pieces, and the other is that actually families are surprisingly resilient and will adapt like some new form of germ to changed circumstances, and it will re-form in different permutations but actually is quite stubborn and strong. I can't decide between those two things, but I constantly write about the chaos of it."

Consider the chaos in *Close Relations*. Gordon, a builder, and his wife Dorothy have three daughters variously scattered throughout the landscape of maturing womanhood. Louise is a rich country housewife. Pru is a publisher stuck in a demeaning affair, while Maddy is just back from two years roaming Africa. Before anyone can say *Bouquet of Barbed Wire*, we're up to our armpits in a quagmire of broiling passion in which everyone is excavating the underwear of the person you least expect them to.

Up in town, Maddy finds out what it's like to have her breasts nibbled, while the



Moggach (left): the fiction and the facts of her life are intertwined, although she has dealt with subjects, such as lesbianism in 'Close Relations', of which she has no personal experience. Photograph: Neville Elder

casually racist Gordon hips into bed with the young black nurse who cares for him after his heart attack. Meanwhile, down in the country the drippy keeper of the doomed corner shop has a hopeless pash for local chateau Louise, and her horse-mad teenage daughter has the hots for the horny-handed blacksmith.

Pru, the only member of the family who brings a complicated emotional life into the story ready-made, entangles it further when she jumps into bed with her lover and his wife. (This may be the place to mention a

bizarre coincidence of casting: Pru is played by Amanda Redman, her lover by Lorcan Cranitch, and both are best known on television for playing characters called Beck).

Moggach's own experiences in the field of marital breakdown can be seen as involuntary research. Out of perhaps 200 people in her circle of acquaintance, she claims she knows of only three successful long-term marriages. "One of my measures is that if they come to dinner and I hear them talking as they come up the path, they've still got things to say to each other." Her par-

ents, who are both writers, failed this particular test after three decades of marriage, and have since remarried. Her own marriage lasted 14 years, after which she spent 10 years co-habiting at weekends with Mel Calman, the *Times* cartoonist. Then three years ago he died in circumstances that, again, no novelist would dare invent: he had a fatal heart attack while watching a Brian de Palma film in the Empire, Leicester Square.

"It was during *Carillo's Way*," she says, "which is a very violent film. A man's throat was cut at the beginning and I think that's

what did it. I don't know why we went to it because he hated violent films. But we wanted to watch Al Pacino and there was nothing else on. They took him to the hospital but I knew he was dead in the cinema."

Three months later she started living with a Hungarian artist 15 years her junior called Szabo Pasztor, a charming artist-artisan with a wispy black beard, both of whose names mean shepherd. Moggach sold her house in Camden and moved into an old servant's cottage next to Hampstead Heath. With Hungarian friends, Pasztor has refurbished it into a richly detailed warren of small dark-walled rooms stuffed with wood and marble and gorgeous detritus rescued from skips.

Moggach's fiction and the facts of her life are close relations. She was brought up in Stanmore, went to Bristol University, married, went to Pakistan with her husband, then settled in Camden and had two children. Her first book was about a girl who grew up in Stanmore and went to Bristol University, her second was about a young mother with two young children in Camden, her third about Pakistan etc etc. After her divorce, the family trees in her plots began to look more baroque, and the novels tackled subjects in which she has no direct experience - child-snatching, child abuse and, in *Close Relations*, lesbianism. "I've never been a lesbian," she says, "but I've got people lined up if I'm ever going to be one."

Recently she returned for the first time to the cinema where Calman died. "I had to give a talk at the London Short Film Festival. At the end of it the chairwoman said, 'If you could write any film what would it be?' And I said in front of this audience of two or three, 'You'd walk into a Dutch 17th-century painting and a woman's reading a letter and we'll go in and see who the letter is from and what's happening to her.' The next day there was a phone call from a production company saying, 'We were in the audience. What a wonderful idea for a film.'"

Needless to say, she started writing it as a novel first, from a 1660 domestic interior by Job Berkhuyde that is hanging in her sitting-room. She finished it this week. When she comes to write the screenplay, she'll be able to recycle the plot from the skip of her own imagination.

'Close Relations' begins tomorrow at 9.20pm on BBC1.

An indelicate subject gets the gentle touch

Birmingham Repertory Theatre's production of new play 'Frozen' explores the evils we shy away from in an extremely watchable way. By David Benedict

NANCY despairs of Ingrid, her wayward daughter. "It's like negotiating with Attila the Hun," she quips. Which just about sums up Bryony Lavery's remarkable new play *Frozen*, which turns out to be a series of increasingly indelicate negotiations handled with astonishing dramatic delicacy.

As Lavery explains in an illuminating interview in the programme, it began as an investigation into the banality of evil but swiftly became an examination of the power of good. If that sounds like the thesis of a giant Iris Murdoch novel, *Frozen* is actually a tightly knit, 20-year journey across an emotional minefield.

One lovely sunny evening, 10-year-old Rhona goes missing. Her mother, Nancy, retreats into a state of frozen hope. Meanwhile, Agnetha (Josie Lawrence) is in Birmingham researching into the difference between crimes committed through evil and illness: "A sin or a symptom?"

Then there's Ralph (Tom Georgeson) a loner with "a bit of previous". All three gradually link up, but as Ruari Murchison's austere eloquent design and Tim Mitchell's superb lighting indicate, each of them is isolated by different forms of grief.

Lavery mirrors this by using monologues. Sometimes these

are a little over-explanatory (Agnetha's lecture, for example) which slows the momentum, but elsewhere the device has real dramatic purpose. The characters are compelled to confess, to tell their stories not only to us but to themselves.

This is particularly true of Nancy. Anita Dobson gives a superbly measured performance, summed up by the moment where she finally faces the truth. She takes all the time in the world and the audience responds with an equivalent rapt intensity.

By obscure coincidence, this subject matter is alarmingly topical and Lavery refuses to shy away from her story's terrifying

implications. She knows that it's the dramatists responsibility to explore the evils we shy away from, but her unflagging imagination deflects the horror for the audience and renders the unbearable supremely watchable.

The most shocking aspect of the writing is its engrossing restraint. At the heart of the play is an act of unspeakable violence but we are never forced to witness it. Graphic depictions are at best redundant when compared with the importance of our immediate and considered responses to the consequences of murder. Only when Ralph is banged up in a cell does violence finally break loose and even then it is at one remove,



Anita Dobson gives a superb performance as Nancy

residing in the immensely powerful boiling language.

Bill Alexander's spacious, detailed direction consistently avoids undignified, obvious moves. He has taken the wise decision of producing the play in the vast auditorium of the main house, to give the idea space to resonate among a big audience.

More importantly, he refuses to insult our intelligence by taking sides. As Ralph lovingly lists the names, "Sweet Susan, Little Linda, Baby Bonny...", Alexander adds rose-coloured light and floats in strains of Handel's *Largo*. Ralph's list may sound like flowers, but, in fact, they are videos. Very nasty videos which he packs into the suitcase which he clutches to his heart. Together with Georgeson's unstintingly honest performance, the scene is completely sincere and profoundly unnerving.

It's all too easy to ambush an audience's tear ducts by subject matter alone. Reviewing the schlocky Seventies TV mini-series *Holocaust*, Dennis Potter destroyed the defence that it was "moving" with the remark that "if you can't make the mur-

der of six million Jews moving you shouldn't be in television".

Not for one moment does Lavery hitch a ride on the horror of her subject matter or succumb to eliciting unearned emotion. The movement of the play is consistently surprising, and even bravely comic. Potentially explosive scenes are quietly beautiful, and apparently insignificant moments suddenly quiver with passion. The almost thriller-like promise of the play's climactic confrontation is like a time-bomb ticking in the back of your head but even there, Lavery delivers the unexpected.

As Nancy tells it, Ingrid wakes from a bad dream. "I'm in the frozen Arctic and I'm exploring but I'm no good at it." Well, she may not be, but Lavery certainly is. Don't be put off by the subject (or the disgracefully unappealing publicity). *Frozen* is really about courage and compassion. It is also intelligent, imaginative and supremely uplifting. The only thing really wrong with it is that it closes on the 23 May.

'Frozen' is at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, 0121 236 4455.

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Big fuss over a small bomb

THE POLITICAL shockwaves generated by India's unexpected series of nuclear tests this week have spread rather wider than the physical ones. President Bill Clinton has called the tests an "irresponsible act". The G8 leaders have expressed their concerns and imposed economic sanctions. Of course, no one can be in favour of the indiscriminate spread of nuclear weapons technology. Many sane people would even like to try to put the atomic genie back in the bottle. But there is more than a little hypocrisy about some of the criticisms now being voiced about India. How can existing nuclear powers, well represented in the G8, be so snuffy about India's actions, when all that she has done is to follow the policy of nuclear deterrence, which was responsible for 40 years of peace and security in Europe after the Second World War? In any case, these particular tests, modest by the standards of the nuclear club, may yet result in an equilibrium between the powers in the region.

It is worth understanding how the small scale of these exercises made them especially powerful in their political and strategic messages. It is harder to make a small weapon than a large one, and miniaturised warheads can be more potent, as they are easier to deliver. The engineering of such small test heads indicates a high degree of technical skill and sophistication. India can assemble about 60 of these warheads and could deliver them from aircraft or missiles. They can reach China from northern India, or Pakistan from the southern part of the country. They represent an enormous boost to Indian security.

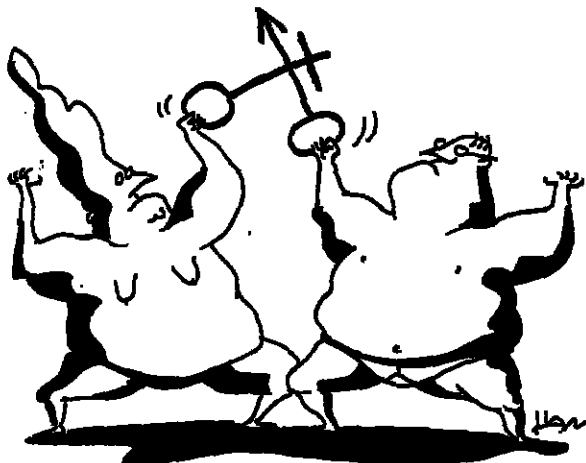
Let us be clear, though, that another reason for the tests is the filip that they give to the ruling BJP, which gained a narrow majority in February's elections. The BJP is committed to Indian nationalism and self-sufficiency, and nuclear weapons are both symbol and substance of India's status as a regional superpower. "Don't push India around" is a message as palatable to India's neighbours as it is popular with her voters.

Menacing though the exercise of her destructive potential may have been, however, India has not invaded a neighbouring country or inflicted human rights abuses on her own people. She retains the distinction of being the largest democracy on earth. Neither has she breached international law. She has not yet signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) or the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The tests could be the prelude to her signing the CTBT - as it was for China. And Pakistan has said that if India signs the treaty, it will too. This crisis may be defused remarkably quickly.

New rules in the battle of the sexes

THE SEX WAR has broken out again, and in our very own pages too. But this is a new version. New man, David Aaronovitch, versus new woman, Suzanne Moore. Suzanne had a go at Paul Johnson, after his adulterous behaviour was revealed this week, and at the predictable hypocrisy of male public figures. She thinks men have a "limited" sexual repertoire. David took offence, and asked what would have happened if he had written similar sweeping generalisations about women. She pleaded guilty to generalising, but said women suffer it all the time. "It is called common sense, or having a laugh, or, in better circles, irony."

Something interesting is certainly happening down there in the trenches. The lines on the domestic battlefield have been redrawn repeatedly over the past 20 years. The presumption is now that men share responsibility for child-rearing, even if women still take the lead. Men are almost always present at the birth of their children, where they used to wait down the



pub. They do not do much housework, even where women are in full-time paid employment, but you do see them pushing pushchairs and doing the shopping. In this respect, the Prime Minister is Everyman. "I wouldn't say he is intimate with the washing machine, but he knows where it is," says Cherie Blair. He sometimes irons his own shirts and spends a lot of time with Euan, Nicky and Kathryn.

Social change is slow and uneven, and most of it is driven by economics. In some respects, women have achieved equality; in too many others, they have not. Yesterday we reported that men are becoming more prone to depression and women less. Women still suffer more, but the gap is closing fast. Equality of opportunity means equality of misery too. It is significant that the new fragmented, flexible labour market means that economics is at last working in women's favour. All jobs, men's and women's, are now insecure and, at the bottom end of the labour market in particular, women have been able to adapt better to the collapse of unskilled full-time jobs, leaving a rump of poorly-educated young men without a role.

Women are right to insist that, as a sex, they still suffer more discrimination than men. But men are justified in pointing out that they are no longer the main beneficiaries of economic change.

Secret of Sinatra

AFTER John Humphrys announced the death of Frank Sinatra on BBC radio's *Today* programme (can you remember what you were doing when you heard the news?) his co-presenter, Anna Ford, remarked that she thought we would all be hearing an awful lot of *My Way* from now on. Ms Ford was right.

But Frank Sinatra deserves to be remembered for much more than this one song, even if it was his greatest hit. His long and colourful life (his recording career spanned seven decades) will provide a rich source for columnists and biographers. But, one suspects, that they will never be able to definitively answer why, as Cole Porter put it, and Sinatra sang so neatly:

You do something to me,
Something that simply mystifies me.
Tell me, why should it be,
You have the power to hypnotise me?

Third World debt

Sir: When the leaders of the G8 countries meet in Birmingham this weekend, they will be discussing the problem of Third World debt. This is not before time, as a burden of essentially unpayable foreign debt has beset many of the world's poorest countries for the last two decades.

Debt repayments are draining these countries of vital financial resources, hindering economic growth and poverty-reduction and preventing them from tackling enormous health problems. The United Nations Development Programme has estimated that the lives of 21 million children could be saved in Africa by the year 2000 if money currently spent on debt repayments was diverted to investments in human development. In Ethiopia, where over 100,000 children die each year from preventable diseases, debt repayments are four times higher than public spending on healthcare, and in Tanzania, where 40 per cent of the population die before the age of 35, debt repayments are six times greater than spending on health.

As part of the Jubilee 2000 Coalition, we call on the G8 countries to cancel the unpayable debt of the world's poorest countries, as a gesture which would mark the millennium in the most significant way possible.

Professor DAVID BAUM
President, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
Dr MICHAEL BRINDLE
President, Royal College of Radiologists

Dr JUNE CROWN
President, Medical President, Faculty of Public Health Medicine
Dr KIT HARLING
President, Faculty of Occupational Medicine

Dr R E KENDALL
President, Royal College of Psychiatrists
Dr SANDY MACARA
Chairman of Council, British Medical Association

Professor COLIN MacKAY
President, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow
Professor RODERICK MacSWEEN
President, Royal College of Pathologists

Sir NAREN BATEL
President, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
Professor J C PETRIE
President, Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh

Professor LESLEY REES
Head, International Department, Royal College of Physicians
London WC1

'Sanctity' of life

Sir: Paul Valleyly may find Peter Singer's rejection of the sanctity of life disturbing, but it is Professor Singer's views that stand up to closer scrutiny ("The man who would kill disabled babies", 14 May).

Belief that life is in itself sacred would demand an equal respect for all life, be it vegetable, insect or animal. Given that most of us would find that view intolerable, the next logical step is to claim that there is something about human, or advanced animal, life which gives it its sanctity. This cannot be the mere fact of it being human. It is rather that human life has certain features, such as sentience and capacity for pleasure and pain which make it valuable. But then, if a human life lacks these features, it lacks what gives it its value.

The notion that human life is of itself sacred is no more than an honourable but ill-founded fiction.
Dr JULIAN BAGGINI
Editor, *The Philosophers' Magazine*
London N4

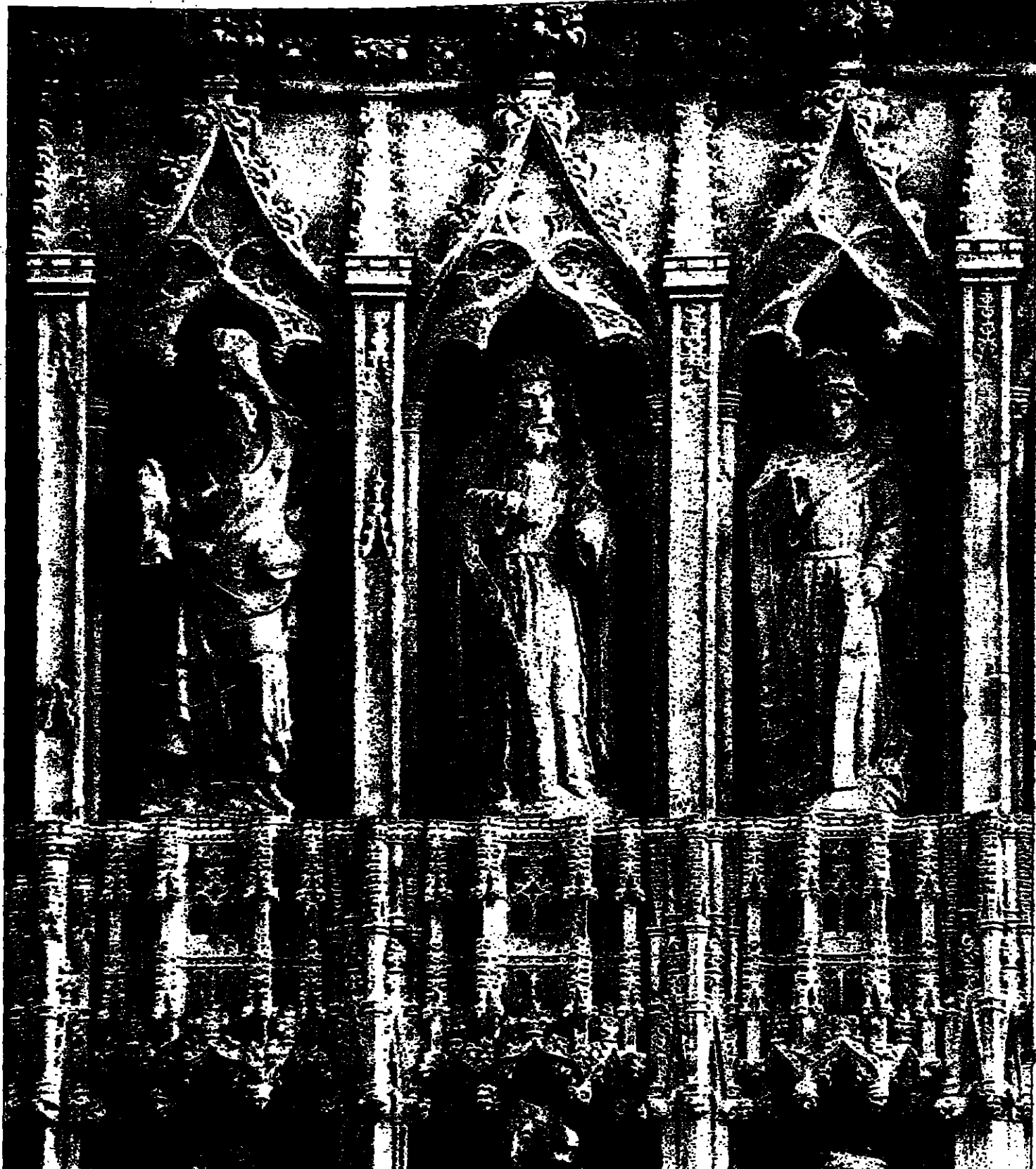
Sir: Paul Valleyly was wrong to say that ending the life quickly of a severely disabled suffering baby, who has no chance of survival, takes for granted that there is no difference between killing someone and allowing them to die - it is precisely that difference that Peter Singer is highlighting. It's just that he doesn't feel that we do well by the child if we allow "not killing someone" - a moral value - to have absolute trumping power over another morally valuable outcome, namely relieving great suffering.

Moral values should not be used as an excuse to avoid facing up to a difficult decision. Singer presents us with a real-life human moral conflict, and it is not resolved by saying that it is "absolutely right" not to kill - we are still left with a child in horrible pain. Human life is sacred - that is why this case presents a dilemma - but does that mean it is always good to preserve it at all cost to the baby whose life it actually is?
EMMA THORPE
Thames Ditton, Surrey

Sir: Professor Singer's concern is how to end severely disabled lives in a kindly rather than cruel fashion.

If I, as a veterinary surgeon, were to end the life of a suffering animal by starving it or allowing it to die from an untreated respiratory infection, I would expect to be struck off the Veterinary Register for cruelty. Yet these are the methods advocated for children by the ethics adviser of the British Medical Association.

Why, I wonder, should we be kinder to dogs than to children?
LEONARD BLACK FRCVS
Womersley, Surrey



Sculpture on the exterior of Exeter Cathedral. Who should pay for its upkeep? See letter below right.

Photograph: Marc Hill/Apex

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number
Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

India's nuclear tests

Sir: The nuclear tests by India may not be welcomed by nuclear weapons states, but they do answer India's security concerns. India does not need nuclear weapons to counter Pakistan. The real threat is from China. It is unlikely the US or the UK will come to India's aid in case of a war with China.

Instead of condemning India, it would be prudent to enter into a constructive dialogue so that the Indian authorities can prevent fissile material from falling into rogue hands, maintain the nuclear reactors properly (to prevent a fallout) and safely dispose of nuclear wastes.
B GHOSH
Grimsby

Powers of the PCC

Sir: You criticise the Press Complaints Commission for not ruling against a newspaper on a matter of taste which you say is "apparently" outside the PCC's remit (leading article, 18 May).

It is indeed outside the PCC's remit - for good reason. When the PCC was established, the newspaper industry itself - not my Commission - decided that we should not have powers to adjudicate on matters of taste.

The thinking behind it - with which I am bound to say I am in agreement - is that the boundary between deciding on matters of taste and exercising censorship is too narrow. What is poor taste to me is good taste to someone else: let the market - which, as all newspapers know, is highly competitive - sort that out. If newspapers now have a different view, then they should change the powers of the PCC - not criticise it for something beyond its control.

You say that the Commission is

an "adjudicator on trial". That is correct: self-regulation - which seeks to balance freedom and responsibility - will always be "on trial". For myself, I think I would win few admirers by acting *ultra vires* and starting to exercise powers of censorship that newspapers themselves never intended me to have.

Lord WAKEHAM
Chairman
Press Complaints Commission
London EC4

Labour and the unions

Sir: Anne McElvoy says (Comment, 12 May) that trade unions and John Monks would have more influence if they severed their links with Labour.

Let's make it clear. John Monks and the TUC have no institutional links with the Labour Party. Neither do the majority of the unions in the TUC. Even Unison is only affiliated for part of its membership. How does this give them more influence than those who are?

My own union is affiliated to the Labour Party, but we lobby all political parties on relevant issues. We have a Parliamentary Committee of 80 MPs, 11 MEPs and 8 members of the House of Lords. We regularly brief them and are advised by them. MPs welcome our first-hand knowledge of the world of work.

The same goes for our day-to-day work in developing party policies as an affiliated union on issues where our members have expertise, such as competitiveness, healthcare, lifelong learning, and fairness at work. With the MSF nominee Margaret Wall as deputy to Tony Blair on the joint Policy Committee of the Labour Party, and our representatives on the National Policy Forum and its key sub-committees, our direct affiliation enables the concerns of those in the world of work, their

families and communities to complement the views of the "great and the good".

Affiliation provides for ordinary people to have a say at all levels - just as it was always intended to.
ROGER LYONS
General Secretary
MSF
London EC1

Eurovision entries

Sir: Heather Henderson asks (letter, 13 May) why Israel takes part in the Eurovision Song Contest. Some time during the 1960s, the Israeli radio or television network applied for membership of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and was accepted. Since then they have won the Eurovision Song Contest three times.

If the Palestinians eventually get a broadcasting network of their own which can be affiliated to the EBU, there is no reason why they should not have an entry to the song contest. If any other Mediterranean country wanted to enter it would be welcome.

I V LLEVIN
Bradford, West Yorkshire

Pedestrians in peril

Sir: "Britain's roads are the safest in Europe" proclaims S Ferguson (letter, 9 May). In fact, the UK has the highest number of pedestrian road deaths in Europe.

1750 pedestrians were killed on UK roads in 1990 (HMSO figures), significantly more than in France (1520) or the former West Germany (1450). In terms of pedestrians killed per 100,000 of the population, the UK still ranks fifth out of 16 countries: hardly indicative of high standards of road safety.

JOHN A CRAM
York

QUOTE UNQUOTE

The Conservatives believe in the arts, but they don't believe in subsidy. The Labour government believes in subsidy but does not believe in art - Stephen Daldry, former artistic director of the Royal Court Theatre

Robin Cook would gain more sympathy from his predecessors if he did not set himself up as our moral superior. We all did our bit to make a British contribution to a more decent world and it is mildly irritating to be dismissed as immoral rogues - Lord Hurd, former Foreign Secretary

We once had a very important but pompous man to dinner. He was being rude, so in revenge I laced

his chocolate mousse with laxative. It worked brilliantly - Christine Hamilton, wife of the former Tory MP Neil Hamilton

I would wake up in the middle of the night thinking I could hear burglars downstairs. But it was only my bronchial cords making a din - Peter Ustinov, explaining why he stopped smoking

For the last seven years I've had the odd fag now and again when I'm relaxed - which is never - Paul Gascoigne, footballer, on claims he has been smoking up to 20 cigarettes a day

Cost of cathedrals

Sir: I have recently - not for the first time - been involved in a campaign to raise funds for the maintenance of one of this country's priceless heritage of glorious cathedrals - Peterborough. This has brought home to me the frailty of the system on which the preservation of the most important collection of buildings in this country is founded.

Were our cathedrals ruins they would be scrupulously maintained by the state. As it is, each cathedral is the sole charge of its dean and chapter, meagrely funded in relation to the scale of their responsibilities.

Much greater resources should be made readily available to them to ensure the upkeep of these irreplaceable national treasures. It should not be necessary for deans and chapters to expend their energies on fund-raising campaigns, nor for cathedrals to charge for admission, or to commercialise themselves as "tourist attractions". It should not be necessary for us to go cap in hand to the National Lottery to help to raise a small part of our needs, when other examples of heritage or the arts receive tens of millions of pounds at the drop of a hat.

I recommend the establishment of a National Cathedrals Trust, adequately funded by state and lottery, on which cathedrals can draw for their survival. A small part of the effort we have put into raising our £7.3m could have put together an unshakeable claim for at least that amount, had there been a fund to which we could have applied.

DAVID POWELL
Peterborough, Cambridgeshire

Left-wing dementia

Sir: I don't want to be pompous about this, but I thought Suzanne Moore's description of me as "barking" and in the grip of a "right-wing dementia" (Comment, 13 May) was itself pretty demented, disproportionate being one of the measures of a want of judgement.

So I discovered that life's experiences didn't quite match up to the theory and blueprint as mapped by early socialist-anarcho-feminism? So what! Are you allowed to learn by your mistakes? Or do you have to go around shrieking "property is theft" all your life just because you said it aged twenty-two and a half?

As Suzanne's little scribbles will be forgotten while Paul Johnson remains a world-class author and historian for many long years to come, I feel it would be incongruous for me to comment further on her diatribe against him. But this point should be made about the case. Catholics are taught that they must affirm a Christian ideal even where they fail to live up to it. And many men and women do believe in marriage and family life even though they don't always live up to the ideal. They are still entitled to uphold the ideal.
MARY KENNY
London SW1

Humanity's mistake: we ate our rivals and are paying for it still



DAVID
AARONOVITCH

ONCE upon a time (maybe some 550 million years ago), on this restless earth of ours, existed not one, but two, entirely different forms of life. I am not talking different like cats and dogs are different; I am talking different like everything you see around you all the time, and nothing that you can possibly imagine, are different. One of these forms of life developed into - among other things - man. And we ate the other one.

This, at least, is the theory of a geology professor from Massachusetts, Mark McMenamin, who has just presented a paper on the subject to a meeting of the Geological Society of America in Salt Lake City. Professor McMenamin bases his conclusions on studies of some very peculiar fossils called Ediacarans (named after the Ediacara Hills in South Australia where they were first discovered in the 1940s).

Ediacarans, who seemed to predominate on earth before the evolutionary explosion of the early Cambrian period, were no slouches themselves when it came to development. They took a huge variety of forms, with two basic characteristics in common. First, they all seem to have been soft and bouncy; the second shared feature is that they all resembled modern day upholstered furnishings, or household appliances. Eructia, for instance, was the same shape as a coffee mug, while others took the form of quilts, mattresses and lampshades.

Not surprisingly, according to McMenamin, these animals were a pacific bunch, lolling around in warm sludge most of the day, lazily allowing nourishment (in the form of photosynthetic algae) to penetrate their bodies - if the algae felt like it. The professor describes this state as being a "Garden of Ediacara".

So what happened? Well, one of our forebears (a very precocious early trilobite perhaps) developed the two things that made it a dangerous predator: sense organs which allowed it to locate prey, and - that other big plus in the predatory world - mouth parts, to bite its prey when it had found it.

The one development without the other would have been no threat. But put together they spelled *adieu* to the Ediacarans. One by one the quilts, mugs and mattresses were hoovered up by our great grandpas and mas. Within the space of an evolutionary tea-break, they disappeared completely from sight, until rediscovered fifty years ago. Our ancestors then started in on each other.

Everything goes somewhere. One wonders what aspects of our deep psyches are affected by our terrible and exploitative treatment of our parallel life form. It is possible that much of our inner feelings of guilt and responsibility originate in the day that one trilobite turned to one millipede and said, "All gone!" Perhaps it might help us to come to terms with our guilt, were we to apologise to Ediacarans for activities in the Cambrian era.

Other questions are raised too. In recent years some historians (notably Niall Ferguson of Oxford University) have dabbled in alternative histories. You know the kind of stuff, what if King Charles I hadn't been a brainless autocrat but a regular kind of a responsive monarch, might we have avoided Cromwell, the Civil War, regicide and a descent into vulgar democracy? These questions are fascinating, and invariably show how all the great left-wing events in history were accidents, while all the right-wing ones were an inevitable consequence of the way Man really is.

Even so, such speculations are as nothing when compared to the really great historical imponderable, what if we hadn't eaten the Ediacarans? What if we'd left them alone. What if (try to get inside this one), right now, the soft-bodied descendants - the evolutionary offspring - of those early peaceful slime-suckers, ran the planet?

Pessimists would, I suppose, reply that we'd all look like Vanessa Feltz, talk like Michael Howard, and spend most of the day watching *Late Lunch*. But - an optimist - I prefer to think that we would have become like beautiful rococo sofas, intelligent curtains, sentient champagne glasses, all of us growing to enormous heights, incorporating the most complex and satisfying patterns on our dulcet exteriors, living in pleasant sludge most of the year, and going - slowly - to the mountains for our holidays. There would be no wars, no money, and only the most unexciting form of sex.

But it didn't happen. And this is the second part of my meditation; what should we learn from the sad story of the Ediacarans? What, if anything, does it tell us about the nature of things? Sense organs and mouth parts, say the free marketer or the realpolitik; it's a trilobite eats quilt world. She that survives will be she that gets the best mandibles and the sharpest eyes and uses them. He that dies out will be he that lies in ooze and expects his food to volunteer for duty. It shows the inevitable victory of Yang. Yes indeed, says Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, and it also indicates the need for Ediacaran nations, like India, to develop their own mouth parts. There are a lot of predators out there.

No! say the Yinnars (vegetarians, feminists, ecologists and *Independent* columnists). What is proved by this is that we have lost paradise at least once because of bad old predatory behaviour. And just because things have always been like this, is no reason that they always should be. Let us reflect upon the fate of the Ediacarans and resolve that it shall never, ever happen again. Blessed are the meek.

British teenagers lead the world in their sexual activity - why?



GLEND
COOPER

CONGRATULATIONS!

Britain leads the world in something! It's a long time since we've been able to say that. But "We should hang our heads in shame," said the *Sun* newspaper yesterday, reacting to the news that not only does Britain have the highest rate of unmarried teenage mums but our teenagers are the most sexual active on the globe.

The percentage of unmarried women who are sexually active by the age of 19 is 86 per cent. The US manages a measly 75 per cent in second place.

The first thought that springs to mind is: can this be true? Are all the old stereotypes out of date? Remember that sneering by famous Latin lovers? "Continental people have sex lives. The English have hot water bottles," said George Mikes. Or Byron: "What men call gallantry and gods adultery/Is much more common where the climate's sultry."

The English have long been seen as one of the most sexless nations in the world, yet according to the study by the Alan Guttmacher Institute in New York - which analysed data from 53 countries - British teenagers are top of the book-ling list. Cue howls of outrage. "Our world record of shame," said the *Mail*. But are we really so surprised?

British society has changed. In a survey conducted for the Birth Control Trust, researchers found that while in 1983, nearly three in ten people believed sex before marriage was always wrong; by 1991, this had fallen to less than one in five.

British teenagers are just having a good time. It's surely no accident that the two countries which have the highest rate of sexual activity - Britain and America - are also the two that have the strongest youth culture. Around the world it is British and American pop stars, film stars and designers who are forming how we look, what we wear, what we do. It's something our Prime Minister is always reminding us we should be proud of.

And what makes youth culture so vibrant? Well teen icons and pop stars are mainly motivated by sex. Just think of Elvis at the beginning of teenage culture in the Fifties. everything and anything. It's hardly surprising that teens go out and experiment. We've come a long way from the imagery of Cadbury's Flake advert. Now you'd be forgiven for thinking that ice cream is something you eat to accompany sex.

Sex'n'shopping is everywhere. On television or in the cinema you can watch an advert where a woman appears to be in ecstasies dancing with a man in a nightclub - until he finds out its her pager vibrating in her pocket. Or the jeans advert where a girl strips off and into a pair of denims in front of a "blind" man (he's only holding the white stick for someone else).

Ironically, it was Blair's heroine Margaret Thatcher who helped encourage a go-get attitude to sex. She might have been straight-laced herself - she refused to fund an influential sexual attitudes and lifestyle study in the 1980s and even last year was said to be horrified that William Hague was sharing a suite with his fiancée Ffion at the Tory party conference.

But it was no point expecting everyone to keep zipped up and behave when, in all other realms of society, she was encouraging us to act on our desires. Greed was good, in the Eighties, and you could and should go out and get what you want. When capitalism is king



How it begins: we bring our children up in a highly sexualised environment

Photograph: Big Pictures

The Cool Britannia that Tony Blair is so proud of and likes to be identified with includes performers such as the Spice Girls (who put a safe sex message - "be a little wiser baby, put it on, put it on" - in their lyrics). Today's youth are targeted by the advertising guru Trevor Beattie (most famous advert the Wonderbra poster with the catchline "Hello Boys") and successful clothing companies such as French Connection (logo: fuck).

What we've seen is a very successful commercialisation of teenagers. They're held up as an ideal, and used to sell

In some of the soaps it's a real surprise when an episode goes by without someone ending up in bed with someone else. Switch off the television, but then teens can't open any magazine without being given ten top tips to the best sex ever. Yesterday in an editorial, *The Sun* pronounced sanctimoniously: "The more sexually aware our children become at too early an age, the more they are tempted." This will be the same newspaper that prominently displayed pictures of a topless Spice Spice canoodling with her boyfriend on pages 1, 4 and 5.

the other codes by which we could live our lives don't stand much of a chance.

Combined with this influence, the family in Britain (unlike many other European countries) no longer has much of a hold. Thanks to geographical mobility families are split up, and there are fewer extended families living together and keeping a watch on younger generations. And if you don't have a parental rod of iron threatening to descend on your shoulders there isn't the same fear about breaking moral codes.

So we shouldn't be surprised that teenagers are having sex. We're all at it (Bill Clinton's practically made a career out of it). We know that what the old-style moralists are saying does not fit with what most adults are doing. And for all the tut-tutting teenagers aren't rushing into sex with abandon - the average age for first intercourse is still 17 and family planning clinics report that teens generally do not feel coerced or rushed

into sex. They give good reasons why they want to experiment and look ahead when told to wait. For marriage? Like all the adults they see around them? Yeah right.

Rather than condemning the fact that 86 per cent are indulging in sex, the real problem is that there is still such a high number of teenage mothers, due to poor sex education, ignorance and a lack of clinics where teenagers can seek contraceptive advice without fear. Earlier this year it was revealed that 1996 (the most recent figures available) had seen the highest number of schoolgirl pregnancies for ten years. Having a baby in adolescence means the chances of a good education or a good job are significantly lessened.

Health Minister Tessa Jowell said in March that she would be enlisting the help of teen magazines to educate girls on underage sex. "This is not about advocating sex, it is recognising the reality of life," she said.

The reality is that British teenagers are having a lot of sex. That may not be a bad thing in itself - social attitudes have changed - but the result is that British adolescents are also having a lot of unplanned babies. That's not good. "Be a little wiser, Baby. Put it on."

It's surely no accident that Britain and America are the two countries with the strongest youth cultures

Debt relief for the Third World is not enough



TREVOR
PHILLIPS

ONE THING that all people of goodwill can agree on is that we are against anyone starving, especially in the Third World. My entire generation was raised on the notion that one sign of decency, if not piety, was to pop a penny in the tin for starving children in Africa.

I will leave aside the inconvenience that if you looked like an African in those days, people might treat you too as a poor soul in need of Christian charity, and concentrate instead on the value of this goodwill to the people of the Great Continent. For debt-forgiveness is a good thing in principle, just as it was in the Sixties when it was first mooted. But is it enough in a world where the economies of individual nations are no longer circumscribed from within their own boundaries?

It should be no surprise to hear that the case in favour of debt-forgiveness is being made so strongly at the G8 summit by a child of the Sixties who carries strong religious convictions into his politics. The Prime Minister no doubt believes that this is the sort of thing he is in politics to do.

To some it is slightly more surprising to see that the Dome Secretary, Peter Mandelson, has added his name to the petition organised by campaigners for debt relief. However, this probably reflects more the fact that the Minister Without Portfolio belongs to a generation where, whatever your politics, ending Third World poverty is an article of faith in the civilised world. So it's hard to fight back the instinct to cheer when you hear the stirring speeches in favour of forgiving developing country debts. It's a celebratory gesture worthy of the millennium.

This is not just an issue about money; it is also about democracy, and the right of nations to make their own mistakes. It is not just the debt to which the developing world objects; it is the fact that it allows the developed world to tell even democratically elected governments what to do. The IMF even now imposes detailed economic and social policies as the

price of its help. No one says that governments cannot make a priority of health care, but any that do seem to find the water just a little rougher when it comes to negotiations over debt rescheduling.

However, there are difficult questions which the campaigners don't raise, and that the sum would do well to consider. For one, how do we deal with the fact that, even if you take the decision to forgive debt, that won't feed a single child by itself? Relieving debt will not by itself build new dams, modernise

country from which my own family comes, Guyana.

It is the size of England and Wales, but has a population of less than a million. GNP per head is less than £400, and infant mortality is around 60 per thousand live births - a figure not known in Europe since the Middle Ages. Its debts total over a billion pounds. And it is doing well, by the standards of most.

Its people work hard, its government is pretty much democratic and its financial management is of the Gordon

In my generation one sign of decency was to pop a penny in the tin for Africa

farms or provide viable businesses that offer regular jobs. To tackle that we may need to look closely at an uncomfortable fact: the only agency that may have the power to dig the developing world out of its hole is the one everyone distrusts most and likes least - global capital.

The most significant players in many developing countries are not governments or aid agencies: they are the global companies that beside the world, in effect buying the assets of nations. Take for example the

Brown prudency school. Not much wrong here, except that the place is falling apart with one hope of rescue. The one ray of light shines through the virgin rainforest that covers four-fifths of the country, and which is highly prized by the massive international logging concerns.

For over a decade now, Guyana has literally had to sell itself, bit by bit, to transnational corporations. If nothing changes, sooner or later, it will return to its pre-colonial status: a territory formally constituted

as a state, but for all practical purposes, in truth a glorified company town.

As a child, when sugar was king, and the West Indies were a monoculture which existed on that one crop, the country was more or less owned by Bookers, who owned Tate & Lyle. It was a steady relationship; we elected the government, they reported to the colonial administration, who made Guyana do whatever Bookers needed. Few people objected; as in all company towns, a home, a school and a regular pay cheque quelled most people's revolutionary instincts.

We are returning to those days. It may be inevitable, and it may well be the only way to feed the people. But if these countries are to become company towns the role of politics must be to impose some rules. Otherwise debt-forgiveness will have a simple unintended consequence.

Governments with their creditworthiness restored will, rightly, want to attend first to their infrastructure needs - new roads, railways, telephone systems, irrigation. Will the people benefit? In the medium term, maybe; but not as soon or as the construction and telecoms companies who will pile in to spend the revenues freed from the burden of debt.

In the end the people who must be praying hardest for the debt relief campaign to succeed are not the liberal politicians and do-gooders; it is the accountants and the marketing men in giant utility and building companies, scouring the world for new ways to extend their reach.

It's a difficult dilemma for the G8 leaders. Can democracy, debt relief and global commerce work together? If they don't, I'd lay odds that democracy will go out of the window first. But there are steps they can take.

One should be to ensure that no nation becomes a one-company town. Bananas may be the only industry on your island; but must it always be Geest and only Geest which rules the roost? Second, as the South Africans have insisted, should there not be some semblance of local participation? Governments in developing countries may well be subject to economic blackmail, but surely part of the price should be representation on local subsidiaries for local people.

There is no reason why the debt agenda should not be pursued powerfully and passionately. But by itself, it is no longer enough. Alongside forgiveness, some hard decisions have to be made about how to deliver the developing world from some of the evils that await it.

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OFT warning adds to pressure on banks



DEREK PAIN

MARKET REPORT

BANKS, particularly the former building societies, suffered sharp punishment as the Office of Fair Trading warned about their treatment of customers.

They were under pressure even before John Bridgeman, the OFT director general, said he intended to investigate complaints against Northern Rock, off 51p at 555p. Negative comments from Dresdner Kleinwort Benson created the early unease. The investment house warned the mortgage war was intensifying and suggested Halifax and Woolwich could lose out.

With nagging worries that the Far Eastern crisis could hold some unpleasant surprises for some of the banking community, the sector could muster few friends on a day the stock market fretted about the possibility of higher interest rates as well as the tiger economies.

Abbey National fell 34p to 1.047p; Alliance & Leicester

20p to 800p; Halifax 11.5p to 776.5p and Woolwich 6.25p to 339.75p. Schroders dropped 58p to 1.915p; Lloyds TSB 32.5p to 861p; Bank of Scotland 28p to 670p and Barclays 24p to 1.123p.

Ladbroke was again the blue chip front-runner. Shares of the betting and hotel group romped ahead 15.5p to 357.5p, a two day gain of 33p. Closer links with Hilton Hotel Corporation of the US seem to be the spur. HHC promised to buy 5 per cent of Ladbroke, to underlie a trading relationship, and two share deals on Thursday awakened hopes the stake build-up had started.

There are also hopes of extensive corporate action, perhaps even a bid for the company.

Footsie spent most of the session in retreat, ending 30.7 points down at 5,917.8. At one time it was off 82. Supporting shares again out-performed their peers. The mid cap index achieved yet another peak

while the small cap ended unchanged.

The thought of mega-bids in the telephony industry gave Cable and Wireless a 20.5p boost to 695p and Orange 8.75p to 448.75p. BT, with year's figures next week and talking about US adventures again, fell 4.5p to 645p.

Coit Telecom surged another 145p to 2,085p as Lehman Brothers made positive noises.

Next, where finance director David Keens has warned about continuing difficulties, fell a further 15.5p to 484p. The shares were 835p before doubts set in about trading.

Allied Carpets continued to sap retail confidence, producing a profits warning which sent the shares sliding 47p to 89p. Two years ago the shares were floated at 215p. Its comments left Carpenters looking threadbare with a 23p fall to 337. DFS Furniture also fell 10.5p to 256p.

A profit warning from

Stoves, the cooker maker, cut the shares 49p to 158.5p; Crest Packaging dropped 8p to 49.5p after warning about profits.

Rolls-Royce lost 2.25p to 290.75p after confirming a \$400m Singapore Airlines order. Biffen, the mining group, ended 1.25p lower at 166.75p; there was a late trade involving 100 million shares at 158p.

An upbeat trading state-

ment and support from Credit Lyonnais and Salomon Smith Barney pushed health-care group Nymed American share 60p higher to 2.130p.

Shipbroker Horace Clark rose 13p to 130.5p. It rejected a 130p offer from Charles Taylor Group and Howe Robinson Investments.

Prism Leisure was another to collect an approach. It did not lead to an offer. The shares slipped 2p to 68.5p.

But the new bid approach to Trust Motor drove the shares 17p higher to 198p and engineer Headway gained 14p to 57.5p after admitting talks were on.

Reece, a distributor of

cycles and industrial fasteners, firmed to 2.5p. Britannia, the construction group, is thought to have topped up its recently acquired 14.9 per cent shareholding. Last year, after stake-building, it took over British Building and Engineering.

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Regulators crack down on savings and undertakers ...

Bank shares tumble on Rock inquiry

By Clifford German

SHARES in the banking sector fell heavily yesterday after the Office of Fair Trading threatened the banks with court action if they failed to treat customers fairly.

The OFT issued a strongly worded warning to banks such as Northern Rock which have cut interest rates on accounts without giving savers the opportunity to transfer their money to more profitable accounts without penalty.

The OFT is investigating complaints by savers that Northern Rock restructured accounts without warning last month, reducing interest rates, and denied them the freedom to move elsewhere without notice.

But the investigation could be extended to other banks and building societies, the OFT said yesterday. That view was echoed by Leo Finn, Northern Rock's chief executive, who said the issues raised by the OFT were industry-wide.

Northern Rock shares fell 51p to 555p after the warning, wiping more than £200m off the market value, but other banks were also affected, with Lloyds TSB down 32.5p at 861p, Abbey National off 34p at 1047p and Bank of Scotland down 22p to 718p.

The investigation follows complaints about the Northern Rock, after the former building society last month merged 11 accounts into three, reducing interest rates by as much as 3 per cent. Most customers were only informed of the changes on the same day that they took effect.

Notice periods for withdrawing money were also reduced, but they were not abolished, leaving investors with a choice between paying penalties to move their cash immediately or being locked into unattractive interest rates until their notice period expired.

The OFT attacked the practice in an exceptionally strongly worded statement. "Customers do not expect banks to change arbitrarily the nature of a product, lock them

into less favourable terms and conditions, fail to give adequate warning of any changes, and treat some account holders differently from others," John Bridgeman, director general said.

If the case is proved, banks which fail to amend their rules would be taken to court, but the OFT believes that banks should take immediate steps to change their rules and compensate investors who feel they have already suffered financial losses.

"Unfair contract terms have no place in modern banking and should be removed without delay. They are in any case unenforceable in law," the OFT said. Mr Bridgeman opened the way to savers to seek redress if they felt they had suffered loss. "Customers do not need a ruling on fairness from the OFT to challenge such terms or seek redress if they feel they have suffered loss," the statement said.

Northern Rock believes it has been unfairly pilloried because it abandoned the traditional practice of publishing its plans to cut interest rates and restructure accounts in the media and unilaterally took the decision to notify customers directly of the changes it planned to make in the interests of customer relations. In doing so it attracted high-profile criticism which other banks have avoided.

The outcome of the investigation is likely to have a major effect on the rules governing deposit accounts in general and notice accounts in particular. Banks and building societies may be obliged to give account-holders the same notice of a proposed cut in interest rates as they require for savers for penalty-free withdrawals. If so institutions may further reduce the length of notice needed to withdraw cash from notice accounts, or replace them with fixed rate accounts which the investors in for a fixed period.

The rules could be changed to require investors to be informed personally of rates changes, although that would be cumbersome and costly, Northern Rock said.



The inquiry into the funeral industry will focus on the links between directors and crematoria.

OFT investigates funerals

By Nigel Cope
Associate City Editor

AN INVESTIGATION has been launched into Britain's funeral industry following concerns over over-charging and heavy-handed selling techniques. The investigation by the Office of Fair Trading comes after a television documentary last week claimed to have uncovered unethical business practices, including staff mis-treating dead bodies and using occupied coffins as waste paper baskets.

John Bridgeman, Director General of Fair Trading, said he had become "increasingly disturbed" by allegations about the £840m industry, including those made in the Channel 4 *Undercover Britain* programme.

"The bereaved are at their most vulnerable as consumers and need protection from the effects of unfair competition and from aggressive sales techniques," he said.

The OFT said claims had been made

about high prices and the alleged practice by some funeral directors of pushing consumers away from cheaper funerals towards the middle-price range where mark-ups are higher.

The inquiry will look at the structure of the funeral market, the links between funeral directors and crematoria and whether the largest companies use their market power to the detriment of consumers' interests. The average cost of a funeral is around £1,200, having risen dramatically over the last few years.

The television programme showed one funeral worker using the arm of a dead woman as a "beer pump". Another threw litter into an occupied coffin. SCI, the company featured in the programme said it had already dismissed the two individuals concerned. The company said it was "shocked and saddened" by the documentary. "We will not tolerate any malpractice in our business," a

spokeswoman said.

SCI is the world's largest funeral business. Based in America it moved into the UK market four years ago and now conducts 85,000 funerals a year out of a total of 600,000.

The company added that it was in favour of more effective regulation and had submitted a document to the DTI last year suggesting a single regulator. SCI resigned from the National Association of Funeral Directors last week and is joining the funeral Ombudsman scheme instead.

CWS Funeral Services, the funeral business operated by the Co-Op, said it hoped the OFT inquiry would bring national regulation. Sandy MacDonald, general manager of the group which carries out one in four of all funerals in the UK, said: "We have long been seeking regulation of the funeral sector."

...but rail and water firms get easy ride from watchdogs

Anger as train lease firms escape tougher controls

By Michael Harrison

RAIL pressure groups reacted angrily yesterday after John Swift, the rail regulator, told ministers not to bring the privatised train leasing companies under direct regulatory control.

The rolling stock companies welcomed the announcement, predicting it would bring greater certainty to the industry. But the pressure group Save Our Railways criticised the move and called on the industry to be forced to spend more on new trains.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, ordered a review of the three rolling stock companies - Porterbrook, Eversholt and Angel Train Contracts - in January. The move followed widespread criticism over their bumper profits and the fortunes made by British Rail managers who bought them on the cheap when they were privatised. A report in March from the National Audit Office concluded that the taxpayer had been short-changed by up to £900m.

In his report to Mr Prescott yesterday, Mr Swift said regulation of the rolling stock market should be introduced only as a last resort. Instead, he recommended that the industry be governed by voluntary codes of conduct and the powers under the Government's new Competition Bill.

One of the biggest areas of concern is the fear that the leasing companies may abuse their market power when existing contracts come to an end and train operating companies need to renegotiate leases early next century.

Mr Swift said it was important not to lay down rigid controls, which would be inappropriate to deal with possible abuses when the leases, which cover 11,000 existing vehicles, start to come up for renewal. Stagecoach, which owns the train leasing company Porterbrook, welcomed the regulator's review. Mike Kinski, chief executive, said it would bring greater certainty and encourage more investment in rolling stock. Stagecoach shares rose 9.5p to 1215.5p.

Angel Train Contracts, which was taken over by Royal Bank of Scotland last December, said it looked forward to drawing up a code of conduct in consultation with the regulator.

But Jonathan Bray, of Save Our Railways, said it was imperative the leasing companies, which made combined profits of £348m last year, were compelled to invest more. "We need tough action on the rolling stock companies who are currently profiting from old and overcrowded trains to the tune of £1m a day," he added.

The pressure group said that in the four

John Swift said that the placing of almost £2bn worth of orders meant there was no need for regulation



years since privatisation only 961 vehicles had been ordered, against the 2,000 BR delivered in the five years prior to that.

But Mr Swift said that orders worth almost £2bn for 2,000 new vehicles had been placed and that there was no need for regulation of new rolling stock orders since there was a growing competitive market for financing.

He also came down against any further mergers between rolling stock and train operating companies. Stagecoach also owns South West Trains but Royal Bank of Scotland, which owns Angel, and HSBC, owner of Eversholt, have no passenger train franchises.

Ofwat opposes ban on disconnections

By Michael Harrison

THE WATER regulator clashed with the Government yesterday after opposing plans by ministers to ban suppliers from disconnecting customers who fail to pay.

Ian Byatt, the director general of water services, warned that such a move could increase water bills significantly. He also voiced doubts about giving customers the universal right to have water meters installed free of charge.

In his response to the consultation paper on water charging from Michael Meacher, the environment minister, Mr Byatt said: "Ofwat believes that the threat of disconnection is important. Without it, some customers may decide they do not need to pay. Rising levels of uncollected accounts will lead to pressure for high bills for water customers as a whole."

His comments were welcomed by the water industry. Pamela Taylor, chief executive of Water UK, said that Mr Byatt had "hit the nail on the head".

According to a survey by the organisation, which represents water companies in England and Wales, the level of bad debts could rise by 300 per cent if water companies were prevented from disconnecting customers for non-payment. Bad debts are currently running at about

Ian Byatt said that the proposed ban on disconnection could lead to increased bills for other consumers



£90m a year, or 1.5 per cent of turnover.

Ofwat's latest figures show that the number of customers disconnected for non-payment fell sharply last year for the sixth year running. In 1997-98 disconnections fell to 1,907 - a drop of 39 per cent on the 3,148 recorded in 1996-97.

Mr Byatt said that demonstrated that the water companies were getting better in their ability to differentiate between customers who were unwilling to pay their bills and those who were unable to do so.

He said there was a need to strike a fair balance between meeting the needs of vulnerable customers and ensuring sensible and sustainable water usage.

Yesterday in the markets

STOCK MARKETS

Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	5917.80	-30.70	-0.52	6150.50	4382.80	3.56
FTSE 250	5797.80	-2.20	-0.04	5958.00	4384.20	2.79
FTSE 350	2873.00	-11.80	-0.41	2932.70	2141.80	3.41
FTSE All Share	2888.43	-10.78	-0.38	2961.12	2108.58	3.38
FTSE Smallcap	2749.20	0.00	0.00	2749.50	2182.10	2.91
FTSE Floating	1477.30	3.40	0.23	1473.90	1225.20	3.05
FTSE AIM	1108.20	-1.00	-0.09	1109.20	905.90	1.06
FTSE EURO 100	1018.79	-0.07	-0.01			
Dow Jones	9185.75	-7.47	-0.08	9261.91	8971.32	1.56
Nikkei	15242.86	-64.83	-0.42	15810.79	14488.21	0.99
Hang Seng	9538.39	-53.58	-0.56	10820.51	7285.19	4.20
Dax	5393.14	37.32	0.69	5442.00	3487.24	1.51

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling	UK 10 year gilt	US long bond
3 month 1 yr 5 yr 10 yr	1 yr 5 yr 10 yr	1 yr 5 yr 10 yr
UK 7.50 1.00 7.50 0.57 5.97 -0.09 5.90 -1.13	US 5.70 -0.17 5.51 -0.34 6.67 -0.09 5.56 -0.80	US 0.55 -0.02 0.59 -0.27 1.55 -1.23 2.15 -1.18
Germany 3.63 0.47 3.54 0.61 5.01 -0.70 5.59 -0.86		

Money Market Rates				Bond Yields			
Index	3 month	1 yr	5 yr	Index	1 yr	5 yr	10 yr
UK 7.50 1.00 7.50 0.57	Northern Rock 555.00 -51.00 -8.42						
US 5.70 -0.17 5.51 -0.34	Barclays 537.00 -23.00 -4.29						
Germany 3.63 0.47 3.54 0.61	Cell Telecom 62200.00 145.00 7.47						
	075 Furniture 255.00 -10.50 -3.94						
	Bank Scotland 690.00 -20 -2.9						
	Merchandise 138.58 -7.58 -5.75						
	Woods 750 Group 661.00 -25 -3.84						

CURRENCIES

£/€	DM/£	¥/£
at 5pm	at 5pm	at 5pm
Dollar 1.6285 -0.40c 1.6377 Sterling 0.6148 +0.15p 0.6108		
D-Mark 2.9052 -0.02p 2.7849 D-Mark 1.7856		
Yen 218.54 -0.34 190.20 Yen 184.48 +0.27 115.99		
£ Index 103.10 +0.00 98.00 \$ Index 110.20 +0.00 102.50		

OTHER INDICATORS			
at 5pm	at 5pm	at 5pm	at 5pm
Brent Oil (\$)	14.40 -0.07 18.20	GDP	114.80 2.80 111.48 Jul
Gold (\$)	300.85 1.80 347.65	RPI	160.90 3.50 155.36 May
Silver (\$)	5.66 0.10 4.94	Bank Rate	7.25 6.25

TOURIST RATES

Australia (\$)	2.5243	Malta (lira)	0.6176
Austria (schillings)	19.84	Mexican (nuevo peso)	12.59
Belgium (francs)	58.25	Netherlands (guilders)	3.1794
Canada (\$)	2.3030	New Zealand (\$)	2.9422
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8283	Norway (krone)	11.82
Denmark (krone)	10.82	Portugal (escudos)	207.90
Finland (markka)	8.6450	Saudi Arabia (rials)	5.9474
France (francs)	9.4897	Singapore (\$)	2.5645
Germany (marks)	2.6330	Spain (pesetas)	239.19
Greece (drachma)	495.87	South Africa (rand)	7.9639
Hong Kong (\$)	12.26	Sweden (krone)	12.31
Ireland (pounds)	1.1175	Switzerland (francs)	2.3581
India (rupees)	61.12	Thailand (bahts)	57.03
Israel (shekels)	5.5578	Turkey (liras)	395845
Italy (lira)	2797	USA (\$)	1.5945
Japan (yen)	214.92		
Malaysia (ringgits)	5.8072		

Rates for information purposes only
Source: Thomas Cook



JEREMY WARNER ON MEETING BILL GATES AND THE MISTAKE HE'S MADE IN NOT BACKING OFF EARLIER

Unbundling Bill Gates and why it's so hard

IT'S A CURIOUS experience meeting Bill Gates, the world's richest and most successful businessman. I've met many powerful and successful industrialists, but nothing compares to the feeling of awe you get when given this opportunity. The anticipation is of being ushered into the presence of some demi-god. It's nerve wracking and you worry the experience will strike you dumb.

And then it happens and he is none of the things you thought: he's easy going, laid-back, charming, accessible, possibly even sensitive. Certainly he seems genuinely hurt by the persistent attacks on his company that now litter the internet and the pages of the world's press. Meeting this faintly shy, awkward man for the first time three months ago at the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, I found it hard to credit him with being the evil monopolist he's now often depicted as.

The idle chat that dispensed with—hello, how are you, where do you come from, oh, *The Independent*, good paper, and so on—he takes the rostrum before a small gathering of editors and financial journalists. Mr Gates has long been the most fascinating business story of recent times. Now, with the US Justice Department threatening to issue an all-encompassing anti-trust suit against him, the story is about to go nuclear.

I'd heard he was inarticulate and unconvincing: he's not. He's persuasive and

compelling as he takes on the case against him. But as with all those who preach a message, he deals only in generalisations. They are good ones, all the same. He talks about the huge benefits his operating system and applications software have brought to business throughout the world. People don't have to buy our products or upgrades, he says, nor do we use our position to restrict trade or stifle competition.

The usual characteristics of monopoly—restricted output, rising prices and insurmountable barriers to entry—simply are not there in our case, he insists. In fact prices are falling by an order of magnitude, production is rising and new companies and competitors are continually entering the market place.

Mr Gates plainly still has some friends. Later that day I heard a Nobel prize-winning economist praise the defence of Microsoft a stage further. He argued that since the Windows monopoly was created by the market, and since it wasn't immediately apparent it was doing any harm, it was bad policy to attack it. The US Justice Department, he claimed, simply wasn't equipped to judge a new techno-monopoly, nor did it have the laws with which to do so. As for the "bundling" of Microsoft's Internet browser and other applications with its PC operating system, he thought that a non issue. The bundling of products together for sale is com-

mon throughout commerce and should be dealt with on a case by case basis.

He also took the view that Microsoft had a fundamental right to profit from the monopoly of its operating system, a monopoly achieved simply because Microsoft was a cleverer organisation commercially than Apple and others with rival products. Apple's refusal to sell its operating system to other hardware manufacturers was itself a kind of abuse, he said, and Apple only has itself to blame for what happened. In the end we should trust to the market, for if the consumer didn't like Microsoft and its products, it would ostracise the company and find a way round them.

I have to admit, I came away from Davos feeling all warm inside about Microsoft. I was seduced, I really was. Joel Klein and the US Justice Department were most definitely barking up the wrong tree. They were the type that believed all business was theft, and if they could build up enough of a head of steam against a successful business enterprise, they would attack and destroy it. IBM spent 19 years defending what proved to be an ultimately groundless anti-trust suit from the US Justice Department. The process was so distracting for management that it virtually destroyed the company.

Is this really what the US wants to do to Microsoft? Of course Sun Microsystems, Novell and Netscape would like to see Mi-

crosoft brought low and broken up, but what competitor wouldn't want to do that to its rivals. If government is stupid enough to do the job for them, so much the better.

Well, that was my frame of mind at the time but as I descended from the rarefied Alpine air, the doubts began to surface again. Was that not the ice-cold, calculating look of the consummate predator I had caught in Mr Gates's eyes amid the bon amis and smiles? How is it possible to grow from nothing in little more than 20 years to the third largest company by market value in the world without monopoly of a big and fast growing market?

Furthermore I've begun to believe the black propaganda about Windows, that though its price is falling and each upgrade makes it better, it nonetheless may not be a very good operating system. But because everyone else has it, and the overwhelming bulk of other software is designed to operate on it, we have no option but to buy it. Worse, we have no option but to buy each new upgraded version of it. If Windows 98 is not launched because of action by the Justice Department, it will be a blow not just to Microsoft, but to Intel and the legion of hardware producers which rely on each successive upgrade to boost sales of new PCs. It is easy to see how the operating system becomes a conspiracy against the public.

Then there is the opportunity Microsoft

has to use this gateway to promote and sell its applications software at the expense of others. This is what lies at the heart of the Justice Department case against Microsoft. A dominant but inadequate operating system is one thing, but to use that to disadvantage rivals in the applications market is another altogether. This may be a new and vibrant industry, but actually what seems to be happening is not so very different from what happens with all monopolies. One monopoly is used to build another, to cross subsidise into other markets and to freeze out those who would compete in them.

The US has a long history and tradition of trust-busting. Each onslaught has prompted the same siren voices, the same dire warnings over the consequences of attacking and breaking up successful companies. In each case, the US economy has survived and prospered. It is one of the great paradoxes of the free market system that it produces these wonderful breakthroughs, these extraordinary companies and entrepreneurs, but to protect that power of invention and enterprise it needs constantly to cleanse itself of them. The market cannot be relied on to self correct. There must always be a referee.

As for Mr Gates, I believe he has made a serious strategic error in not backing off at an earlier stage. It may now be too late to reverse the tide of hostility building against him.

Allied Carpets adds to high street gloom

By Nigel Cope
Associate City Editor

THERE WAS further evidence of a slowdown in consumer spending yesterday when Allied Carpets issued a profits warning sending its shares into freefall.

The warning follows weak high street sales figures for April reported by the British Retail Consortium on Monday and comes just two months after similar warnings from DFS Furniture, MFI and Carpetright.

John Lewis, the department store group, added to the bad news yesterday when it reported only a modest sales increase in the week to 9 May. It blamed the good weather last weekend which "drew cus-

tomers away from shopping to other pursuits".

Allied Carpets said recent trading conditions had been difficult, particularly over Easter and the May Day bank holiday. "There seems to be a distinct lack of consumer confidence," said managing director Ray Nethercott. "We are just not getting the customers into the stores."

Allied Carpets shares plunged 34.5 per cent to 89p on the news, a fraction of their 215p issue price upon flotation two years ago. The warning dragged down shares in other retailers of higher ticket goods like MFI and Carpetright.

Mr Nethercott blamed a combination of higher interest

rates and the strong pound which had affected workers in manufacturing industries.

"We are finding that the further north we go the worse it is for us," Mr Nethercott said.

"If people are working less overtime they are more likely to think twice about investing a substantial sum in a carpet. Allied Carpets' average selling price is more than £1,000.

Though reluctant to blame the weather he said the freak flooding over Easter had caused problems. It is understood that Allied Carpets has now stopped the expansion planned for its more mass-market Carpetland format.

Allied Carpets saw like for like sales grow by 11 per cent

in January and continued to trade well in February and March. But over the crucial Easter period its sales were 10 per cent below those of last year.

It said it expected the trend to continue and that its full year profits would now be "considerably below" the £16.2m achieved last year.

Brokers have downgraded their forecasts from £19m to £13m as a result. The company said it was maintaining the full year dividend.

Some analysts suggested Allied Carpets could now be a takeover target. However, the identity of a likely bidder is unclear. Carpetright, the main rival could expect to fall foul of the competition authorities.



Chrysalis, the media group, is looking forward to a boost this summer from "Three Lions", England's football anthem for Euro '96, which is to be re-released in time for the World Cup, writes Peter Thal Larsen. Chrysalis owns the copyright to the song, which features the comedians David Baddiel and Frank Skinner as well as Ian Broudie of the Lightning Seeds (pictured from left to right), and has been re-recorded with up-to-date lyrics. The single will jostle for football fans' attention with this year's official England tune, "On Top of the World" which features the Spice Girls. Better results from its radio and television divisions reduced Chrysalis's pre-tax loss to £0.9m from £1.7m in the six months to 28 February. Turnover rose by 14 per cent to £59.9m from £52.5m.

Liffe members angry about delay in restructuring vote

MEMBERS of Liffe, London's troubled futures and options exchange, yesterday expressed frustration at the decision to delay a key vote on restructuring proposals. David Kye, a former Liffe board member and a vociferous critic of the exchange, called the board "totally incompetent". Other Liffe members echoed Mr Kye's impatience.

Liffe said it had decided to delay the extraordinary general meeting from 21 May to early June because members needed 14 days to consider detailed board proposals for change. Liffe's board met last week to discuss details of share ownership reform—one of a variety of proposals designed to reverse the market's flagging fortunes. The exchange originally intended to circulate these proposals to members earlier this week. Now the proposals will not go out until at least the end of next week.

Microsoft talks begin

FEDERAL and state officials began face-to-face meetings with lawyers from Microsoft yesterday in an effort to reach a settlement of threatened government antitrust lawsuits. They included William Neukom, Microsoft's chief lawyer, and assistant attorney general Joel Klein. The settlement were announced on Thursday, just as the Justice Department and a number of states planned to file antitrust lawsuits accusing Microsoft of abusing its power and driving competitors from the lucrative software market. The Justice Department has said that it will delay filing any lawsuit against the company while the settlement talks take place.

Solar-powered football

BP and Newcastle United plc plan to create the world's largest solar-powered sports stadium. The 350 kilowatt solar project is part of Newcastle's plans to upgrade its current 36,000-seater St James' Park stadium to 51,000-seater capacity. BP, which is also the world's largest solar energy company, said the grid-connected solar system would meet 10 per cent of the stadium's electricity needs.

BT 'in no hurry for deal'

BRITISH TELECOM would be a very good partner for a US company but was not in a hurry for a deal despite the failure of its merger with MCI, Iain Vallance, BT's chairman, said yesterday. "We are not in a hurry. Firstly because MCI has continued to support Concert in the US for many years and more importantly because we are not authorised to conclude a new US partnership as long as the MCI-Worldcom merger is not finalised," he told a French newspaper.

Call to scrap pension safeguard

BRITAIN'S £850bn pension fund industry is calling on the Government to scrap a key legal safeguard designed to prevent a repeat of the Maxwell affair. The National Association of Pension Funds is lobbying ministers to end the minimum funding requirement (MFR), a central plank of the 1995 Pensions Act. Peter Murray, chairman of NAPF, said the association would urge the Government to adopt a less cumbersome means of guaranteeing the security of members' pension rights.

Stoves warns on profits

STOVES GROUP, the oven maker, said yesterday it did not expect annual profits to meet expectations as they are likely to be around last year's level. Stoves reported pre-tax profits of £5.2m in the year to May. Shares in Stoves tumbled to close 49p, or almost 25 per cent, lower at 158.5p.

WHO'S SUING WHO



JOHN WILLCOCK

A LEGAL war has broken out over the ownership of English football on the Internet.

Even the Internet "domain" name of the national side, "englandfc.co.uk", is under dispute, in a case which could cost leading clubs huge amounts of money.

The Football Association and 17 mainly Premiership football clubs are suing a one-man firm which has registered their names on the Internet and is seeking to sell the names back to them for hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Domain names such as "arsenal.co.uk", "newcastle.co.uk" and "tottenhamhotspur.co.uk" have been registered at £120 a go by Champion Press, a firm based in Sidcup, Kent, and its proprietor Brian Peard.

Mr Peard remained defiant yesterday, despite having received a writ from the FA and 17 clubs last Tuesday. He said: "We legally own these domains outright. That is not in dispute."

A spokesman for the FA said last night: "It certainly is in dispute as far as we're concerned."

The FA decided to coordinate a legal action after hearing about Mr Peard's contact with Sheffield Wednesday last October. According to Tuesday's writ, Mr Peard wrote to the club saying: "However, we are prepared to sell the (sheffieldwednesday.co.uk) website for the sum of £95,000."

Considering that registration of the name with UK internet firm Nominet had cost Mr Peard just £120, the FA's writ added: "The price asked by the defendants therefore involved a mark-up

of approximately 79,000 per cent." The FA's writ claims that "the defendants have obtained the ... domains in order to sell them at a grossly inflated price."

"The Defendants ... threaten and intend to hold the ... goodwill of the Plaintiffs to ransom."

Champion Press and Mr Peard "do not have any legitimate purpose for registering the ... domains", the writ says.

The FA and the clubs are applying for an injunction to stop Champion Press from "infringing the plaintiff's registered trademarks" and also to stop them "passing off or attempting to pass off ... Internet domain names not being the services of the plaintiffs."

The clubs are also asking the court for an Order that Champion Press transfers the domain names to the respective clubs and any similar name or names which the defendants have registered or caused to be registered for use on the Internet.

The FA and the 17 clubs are using the FA's usual City law firm Denton Hall to issue the writ and fight the case.

It is understood that the FA's camp will be relying heavily on a decision given by Jonathan Sumption QC, when he was sitting as a deputy High Court judge last November.

The decision concerned the "One in a Million" case. The defendant had registered the names of various companies on the Internet, and was sued for passing off and trademark infringement. Mr Sumption QC found against the defendants and ordered that the domain names be assigned to the respective plaintiffs.

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Graca Machel, who will be speaking out at the G8 summit. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

How my love for Nelson Mandela changed my life

Paul Vallely talks to Graca Machel about death, her new lease of life and her charity foundation

IT IS NOT just Nelson Mandela who has helped heal the wounds in the heart of Graca Machel. For five years she wore black, in mourning for the death of her husband, Samora Machel, the founding president of Mozambique who died in 1986 when his presidential jet crashed mysteriously into a South African hillside, murdered she has adamantly maintained ever since – by agents of the apartheid regime. Today she is the woman who walks publicly hand in hand with President Mandela, her head against his shoulder, and who has made him, he says, late in life, bloom like a flower. "I am in love with a remarkable lady," the 80-year-old president has said. "She has changed my life."

He has changed hers too. "I am very happy," she said this week in London, beaming when the conversation moved from the unhappy subject of Third World debt, which is this weekend on the agenda of the world leaders gathered in Birmingham for the G8 summit. She is an elegant animated woman who laughs a lot, when the moment is apt.

Her friendship with Mr Mandela – whom she calls by the affectionate nickname Mandiba – began in 1986 after the imprisoned leader wrote from Robben Island expressing his condolences over her husband's death. She had been left with a son and a daughter, aged seven and 10, and five step-children.

When they met for the first time in 1990 soon after his release both were aware on an instant rapport which began to grow into a friendship when they met again in 1992 when Mrs Machel received an honorary degree from a South African university.

Then in 1993 the African National Congress president, Oliver Tambo, who was godfather to her children, died and Mr Mandela took over as the role and the relationship between the couple grew. After it became clear that Mr Mandela's marriage to Winnie was beyond repair, he began to go Mozambique for the weekend "to get away". The couple realised they had fallen in love.

He launched a fresh investigation into her husband's death. An official South African report at the time blamed pilot error, but there was talk of bullet-holes in the fuselage. How was it going? I asked her. "It is a very complicated issue," she said. "We're dealing with it, quietly."

But what began the progress which has brought her to love and fulfilment was something different. It was a tiny charity called the Foundation for Community Development. It is what, in the two weeks every month that she is apart from Mr Mandela, consumes her time. "It is very small. We give grants and

longer there. As minister of education I dealt with policy formation and macro-economics. And, yes, at the end of the year you know how many people graduate, but you don't touch any one in your everyday life. But here the people I deal with each have a face. It is a two-way process; I receive from them the lessons that they have to teach. It is more human and much more fulfilling. Through this small charity, with only a \$1.5m turnover, I found a meaningful way of continuing to be alive."

Her combined understanding of macro-economics and of its impact at the

'I don't think we're a bad example to South Africa's youth. It doesn't lessen his authority'

loans to small groups of farmers and women to help them generate income for themselves," she said. "We help in kind too, giving goats and cattle from which they breed until they can afford to return the number they were given. We help train and equip women in sewing. And we help build up the skills of indigenous NGOs."

At first sight it may seem an odd move for the woman who was once a guerrilla in the fight to liberate the country from Portuguese rule and then became the only female in the Mozambican cabinet – she was education minister for many years, even carrying on for three years after her husband's death. In 1989, she persuaded the new president to accept her resignation and withdrew from public life.

"I had to rethink, to gather all the scattered pieces of myself. I had to acknowledge that somehow I had been handicapped, that part of myself was no

lowest level gives her a unique position from which to speak out this weekend in Birmingham at the G8. "In recent years the macro-economic indicators in Mozambique have been improving, with annual growth of between 6 and 8 per cent and inflation down to 4 per cent. But that doesn't mean the lives of ordinary people are improving. Quite the opposite. Living standards are worsening."

Think about Britain, she said, and imagine that "35 million people here have no access to clean water – and 20 million women cannot now read or write. That's what it is like for us. Yet we have to pay \$100m a year in debt repayments – which is more than we spend on health and education combined. The IMF and World Bank don't have the courage to acknowledge the ill-effects of the remedy they are imposing. But on the ground you'd have to be blind not to see it. Many of these people aren't going to

survive till we reach the long run." According to the World Bank's Human Development Report an extra 21 million people will die in the Third World between now and 2000 if debt relief is not secured. How can we postpone our right to live? It's not negotiable. The high rate of malnutrition affects the brain – these children may live physically but they will be handicapped intellectually. Such things are criminal. They are silent ways of killing."

Finding the time to carry on her work – and she has recently completed a report for the UN on the fate of children caught up in war – is not easy when she is now involved in a relationship with Mr Mandela which involves international commuting and daily telephone calls during their frequent separations. "It's difficult," she said. "But it's only a 45-minute flight from Maputo to Johannesburg. The real difficulty is having two families, but I love my children and I love him too. If you love somebody you find a way of doing it."

As to reports from Mozambique that she would be standing for president in 1999, they were "nonsense". It is the year in which Mr Mandela will retire and from which point she hopes to help him experience the normal family life he has never had – and find the time to enjoy with him the things he loves doing for which his office never gives him time.

And would they be getting married? "I don't want to talk about it," she said with a squeal of laughter. Was she still talking to Mr Mandela's fellow Nobel Peace Prize winner, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who had publicly complained about their "intimate relationship outside marriage?"

"He's a good friend to Mandiba and he's a good friend to me. He was, and he still is. Of course, we don't ignore what he says, but I don't think we're a bad example to the youth of South Africa. I don't think they see us that way. I don't think it affects the way people in Mozambique think about me and it certainly doesn't lessen Mandiba's authority."

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TOMORROW IN THE SEVEN-SECTION

INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



A man's game

Justin Fashanu, Britain's first openly gay professional footballer, hanged himself earlier this month. Tobias Jones examines a life full of contradictions

Plus

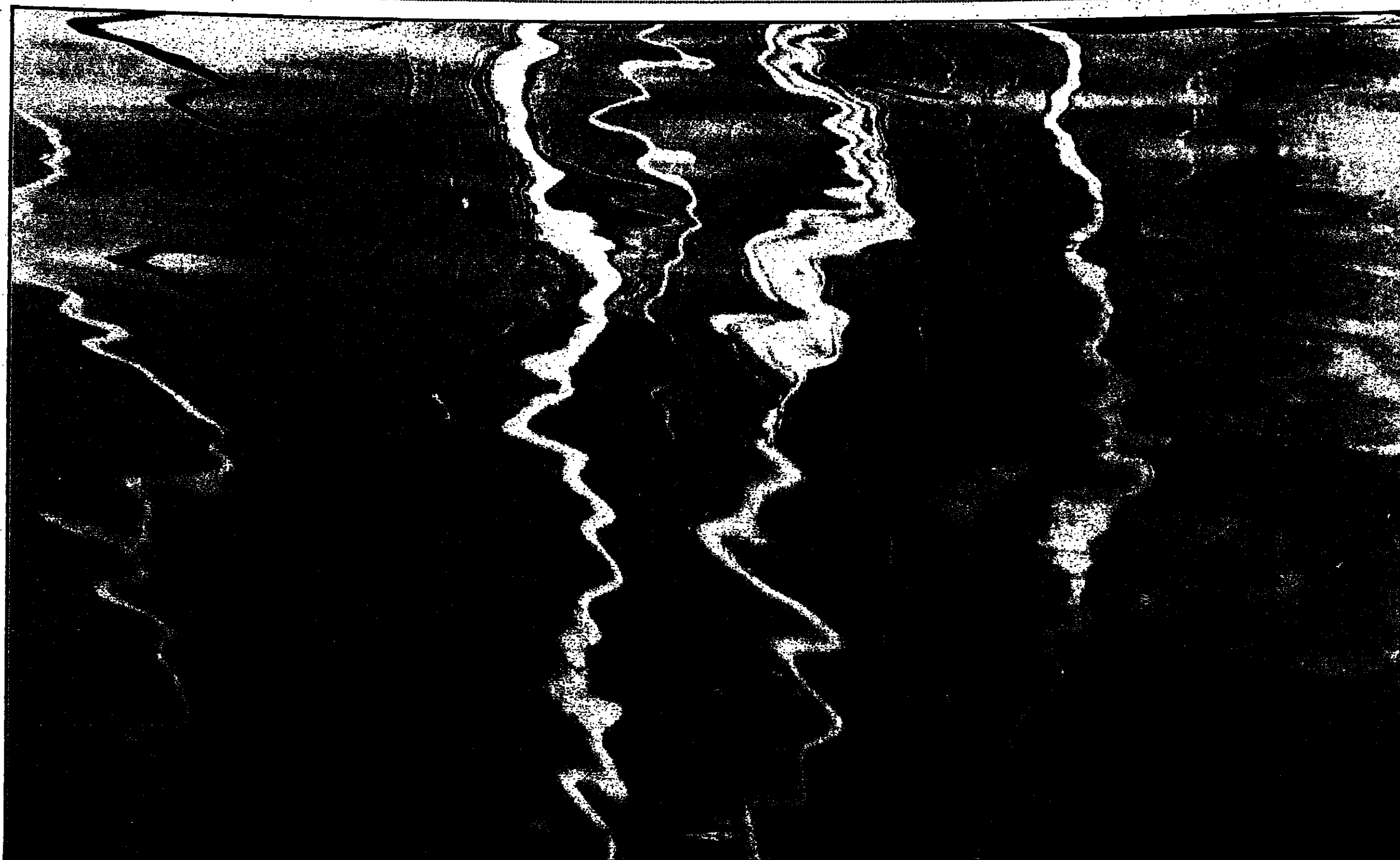
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TIME OFF

TRAVEL, LEISURE & SPORT

Saturday 16 May 1998



PICTURE OF THE WEEK Lights, camera ... Reflections in Cannes harbour during this week's film festival. Photograph by Brian Harris. To order a print of this picture (12x9in) call 0171-293 2534

Week in, week out

William Hartston reveals the hitherto unsuspected connection between Robin Cook and artificial insemination for koalas

The sex organs of mice are stunted by a chemical compound used in a protective coating on human teeth, according to this week's *New Scientist*. The same day that the disturbing report appeared, there came the news from Australia of the birth of the world's first koala conceived by artificial insemination. The day before, the authorities in Taiwan announced that they had built an overhead crossing in a national park to help Formosan rock monkeys to cross a busy road without being hit by cars, while in Japan the ethics committee of the Saitama Medical College granted a request for the nation's first officially sanctioned sex-change operation.

Meanwhile, in the courtrooms of North America, a Canadian dominatrix threatened to bring the tools of her trade into court to prove that her services were no more than legal, role-playing fantasy games, and a New Yorker was charged with selling tapes over the Internet of partially clad women stamping on small animals. A man in Florida, however, was told that he could not legally offer to swap one of his kidneys for a boat; a pest-control company in Tucson, Arizona, offered a \$50,000 reward for the person catching a specially marked cockroach; French researchers began a study involving white rats drinking burgundy, and American doctors

reported that high heels may be a cause of arthritis in women.

Is it not now blindingly obvious what has been going on at the Foreign Office? Do not the above items all point unerringly to a single conclusion? Do they not completely exonerate Robin Cook of all culpability in the arms to Africa affair? Because how can we attach any blame to a man who, from all the evidence above, must have thought the deal was no more than a simple trade in film props? Let me explain...

Just suppose a hastily scribbled sheet of A4 paper is pushed into your bulging in-tray containing the words "export of armaments" and "S. Leone". Would not any Foreign Secretary in his right mind assume this was something to do with a spaghetti western? What the forthcoming investigations will reveal, however, is a far more complex tale.

The "S. Leone" referred to in the Foreign Office documents is not, in fact, the film-maker Sergio Leone, but his lesser-known little sister Sierra (whose mother, incidentally, was celebrated in the 1947 Humphrey Bogart classic *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*). Consistently upstaged by her brother, Sierra was driven into the seediest areas of the film industry.

When the arms to Africa crisis erupted, Foreign Office officials, using an Internet

search in an attempt to find out the exact location of Sierra Leone, were led to a website selling pornographic videos with titles such as *Vanessa's Frog Stamp*.

But who was this Vanessa, star also of *Vanessa, Topless Destructor*, who trampled on small animals while wearing stiletto heels? The Reuters report of this strange foot-fetishistic bestial sadism ends with the

Would not any Foreign Secretary in his right mind think Sierra Leone had something to do with spaghetti westerns?

words: "They are still looking for the women in the videos", presumably to warn them about the potential danger of arthritis. They will not easily identify her, however, since she has gone to Japan for a sex change. The Japanese case is indeed one of a female-to-male swap.

But what sort of perverted character could possibly want to purchase such videos? Is this not exactly the sort of per-

son who would sell his kidney in order to buy a boat to sail to Australia to procure more of this type of filth? Because—make no mistake about it—Ms Leone is now plying her vile trade in Brisbane, as the artificially inseminated koala story makes clear. Here are the relevant passages from the Reuters report: "The problem with artificially inseminating a koala was that, like the domestic cat, it required the physical act of mating to trigger the release of the egg from the follicle on the ovary... semen was collected from a male koala using an artificial vagina." Michael McGowan, a researcher at the University of Queensland, said of the resulting birth: "We are confident this is a world first as the field of research is so small."

Now I don't know much about the sex aids for marsupials industry, but I'd wager a tidy sum that Sierra Leone has access to artificial koala vaginas. It's just the sort of thing a certain type of man would give his right kidney for. Has there not been a disturbing silence from the Foreign Office in recent weeks on the subject of export licences for artificial koala vaginas?

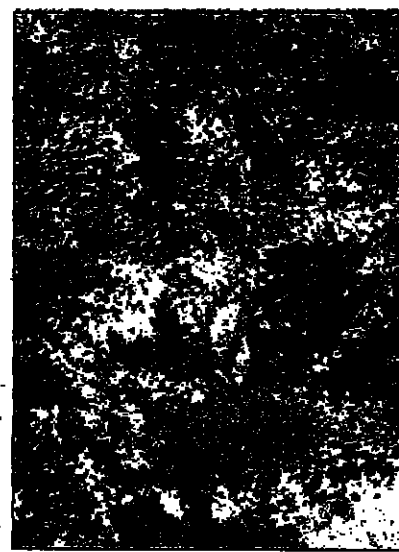
And what may we expect next from Ms Leone? The Taiwanese are already taking steps to protect their monkeys from a bestial remake of *Crash*, but the news from France is even worse. Those Burgundy-

swilling rats are ostensibly part of a study to investigate the role played by resveratrol, a chemical found in grape skins, in protecting from blood clots and heart attacks. Only last week, however, in a survey in the United States 34.8 per cent of adolescent males admitted that either they or their partner was drunk or high on drugs when they last had intercourse.

The vileness of it all is almost impossible to believe: someone is trying to get rats drunk so they will have sex with koalas. No wonder the court in Toronto is so worried about allowing their dominatrix defendant to bring her equipment into court. "Exhibit A, m'lud: an artificial koala vagina with drunken white rat attached." The rat itself, of course, can hardly be expected to testify after it has been intimidated by the threat of having its sex organs bitten by a wicked film director with that organ-shrivelling coating on her teeth.

And is that \$50,000 cockroach a simple prize in a pest-control promotion, as we are led to believe? Or is it the specially trained animal star of Sierra Leone Productions plc—the prize put up by the FBI in an attempt to get the cockroach to testify for the prosecution as they build up their case against Ms Sierra Leone?

Robin Cook clearly has a great deal to answer for.



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A very rough guide to Jerusalem (1841 Edition).

THE JOURNAL OF THE JERUSALEM SOCIETY is the remarkable story of Deborah Burton, and her missionary father who travelled to Jerusalem in 1841, to found a church in the Holy Land. Saturday afternoon, 16 May, 2.30 - 3.00.

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Walking on water



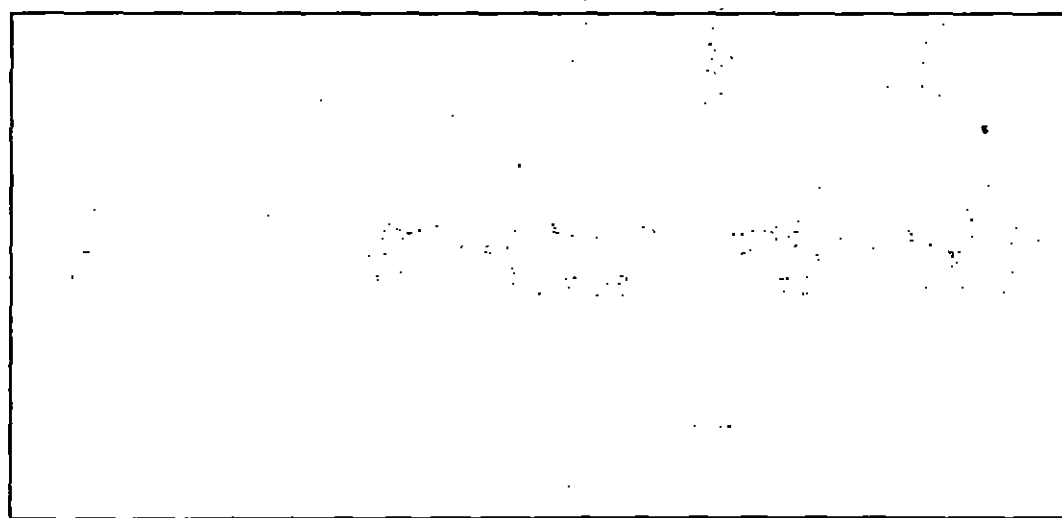
Clevedoners have pulled off a miracle, with the restoration of the 'most beautiful pier in England', writes Jane Lovatt

We walked along until we came to plank 28, and there was our little romantic tribute. A small brass plaque bearing the inscription "Jane Loves Chris". Better than a park bench any day and worth every penny of the £15 it cost to restore this tiny section of Clevedon Pier, in Somerset.

"The most beautiful pier in England. Its demolition would be a tragedy," wrote Sir John Betjeman of this delightful structure. Even those with no interest in seaside architecture would be bound to agree. Built on tall, spindly yet elegant legs, it reminds me of a gangly stalk, or a newborn Bambi just about to wobble into the sea.

The newly restored pier brings to life completely the sleepy yet pretty Victorian resort of Clevedon. Unsuspecting visitors are taken by surprise when they reach the promenade and see this outstretched walkway of grace and simple beauty reaching into the Bristol Channel. No wonder local residents were devastated when it collapsed during load-testing in 1970.

Happily, they can now look forward to a joyful day for their town when, on 23 May, the pier will be reopened, resplendent in its refurbished glory. Great celebrations are to take place, the like of which have



Promenade restored: Clevedon pier in the 1890s, left, and back in fully functioning order today
Main photograph: Tom Pison

not been seen in Clevedon since the pier was first opened on Easter Sunday 1869. This time the man cutting the ribbon will be Sir Charles Elton, whose great-grandfather built the pier.

Thousands turned out to witness the first opening and enjoy the general holiday granted in the pier's honour. A spectacular procession wound its way through the town and on to the promenade. Five hundred children sang a psalm, the First Somerset Artillery fired a cannon volley and a massed band played the National Anthem.

For 20 years the pier provided a new fast route to South Wales, until the railways took over. Later it became an important embarkation point for excursion ships, notably the Waverley paddle steamer, *Britannia*, which still has strong connections with the pier.

Clevedon flourished as a seaside resort, and the pier continued to be a great attraction as well as a source of local pride and pleasure. All was going swimmingly until 1970, when the two end spans collapsed. Clearly demolition was unthinkable – the pier was just too lovely. So in 1972 the Clevedon Pier Preservation Trust was set up. Clevedonians, passionate about their precious planks, got together and threw themselves into fundraising. English Heritage, the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the National Lottery have given major sums; other donations have come from pier fans such as myself and my boyfriend, who sponsored part of a plank.

Much of the £3m required to rebuild this grade

two listed building, however, has come from the proceeds of local events such as beach barbecues, sponsored walks and fishing marathons. No wonder Clevedonians are so proud that their beloved pier, which was partially reopened in 1989, is now just as it used to be.

"The original weather shelters and the pagoda are back in place," says Ivor Ashford, the present-day pier-master. "A lot of dedication and hard work have gone into this project, and we in Clevedon are very excited about 23 May. We are going to try to recreate the original opening ceremony as closely as possible, and we hope that visitors will wear Victorian dress if they can. A striped bathing suit and a straw hat would be perfect."

So if you're looking for a truly English seaside trip to enliven your bank holiday weekend, head for Clevedon, 20 minutes' drive from Bristol. Proceedings kick off at 10.30am with a procession along the beach led by the Plymouth Regiment Royal Marine band. Sir Charles Elton, accompanied by the world-famous bowler David Bryant OBE, who is a local resident, will declare the pier open, and there will be four sailings by the *Britannia*.

There will also be wing-walking, an air display, an air/sea rescue demonstration, street entertainment galore – and, to round it off, a magnificent fireworks display which you can enjoy from the deck of the *Britannia* or from the pier. A grand day out, especially if washed down with lots of Somerset cider. And don't forget to look out for our plaque while you're there.

A plane
ValJet, the low-fare US airline that suffered the fatal crash of a DC-9 in the Florida Everglades, has been relaunched as AirTran. No-frills flights through Atlanta link cities such as Boston, New York and Washington DC with Orlando, New Orleans and Dallas. New York-Dallas costs \$105 (£65) one-way if you book three days in advance; the Boston-Philadelphia short hop is \$42 (£26) if booked 14 days in advance. Call 001 770 994 8258 for bookings from the UK.

A train
Summer officially begins on Britain's railways next weekend. As *The Independent* has reported, Virgin's west coast service is being challenged by other operators offering slower trains but cheap-



er fares. North Western Trains, running from 25 May from Manchester, Rochdale and Blackpool to Euston, may offer a walk-on fare of £10 single from Manchester to the capital, £15 from Blackpool – plus a 34 per cent reduction to railcard holders. Between Birmingham and London, Silverlink County will offer a day return fare of £14.90 on off-peak trains from 31 May.

A boat
Before you board that Brittany Ferry from Plymouth to Roscoff, call in at the port's new National Marine Aquarium (01752 600301). It is open from 10am to 6pm; adults £5.99, children £3.99.

A room
The same ferry is being used by the British Museum Traveller (0171-323 8895) to investigate the Arthurian Legend. It takes in Somerset and Brittany, plus "the Château of Comper-en-Broceliande, a shell built by Merlin to hide the crystal castle built for Vivien, the Lady of the Lake". The six-day tour departs 3 August, cost £675.

A meal
"Greek home cooking can be wonderful,

and the tourism authorities have recently taken a laudable, if long overdue, initiative to persuade restaurants and tavernas to reinvent it. Please boycott any self-service establishment you find; the whole fast-food and self-service culture is so obviously the antithesis of everything the Greek experience offers that such enterprises should be strangled at birth" – Colin Murison Small, in the *Hidden Greece* (0181-766 7868) programme notes for this summer.

A drink
The Biggles Bar, which takes its name from Captain WE Johns's aviation hero, is just the place to steady your nerves before a flight from Lydd International Airport in Kent. Your destination is likely to be Le Touquet, the only route

served by Sky-Trek Airlines (01797 320000), standard return fare, £69.90.

A week from now ...
... the first Milan flight will take off from Stansted with Go (0845 60 54321), British Airways' low-cost airline – fare £100 return. Go will also go to Rome (from next Friday) and Copenhagen (from 5 June). Next week's Time Off will offer a guide to 48 hours in Milan.

A month from now ...
... the traditional ceremony to mark the boundary of Linlithgow takes place in the Royal Burgh, beginning at 5am. If you book two weeks in advance an Apex return from London costs £49. Save £8 by booking one ticket to Edinburgh and a separate one to Linlithgow.

SIMON
CALDER



Can aircraft be struck by lightning? Yes! thundered our postbag. In last week's column Time Off's editor, Harriet O'Brien, wrote that she'd been assured planes were safe from lightning strikes because of the absence of an electrical earth. Almost immediately, phone lines crackled and e-mails sparked.

"Of course aircraft can be struck by lightning," writes Norman W Foster of Cambridgeshire, a member of the Royal Aeronautical Society. Hugh de Lacy of Ipswich corrects the widespread misconception that all lightning travels from the sky down to the Earth. "In fact, a lightning strike can occur between any two points in the atmosphere where a sufficiently high potential difference has built up, and many lightning discharges take place from cloud to cloud ("sheet" lightning). It is quite possible for an aircraft near such a potential difference to be struck by lightning; the sharp edges on aircraft structures tend to concentrate an electric field and provide a preferential path for the discharge."

So what are the likely consequences? Could passengers be fried? Mr Foster again: "Except in the case of total loss, harm to occupants is virtually non-existent as they are protected by the same principle which protects car occupants from lightning, where the surrounding metal structure acts as a Faraday cage."

Harriet did not look thrilled when I showed her the line about "total loss". Several pilots, present and past, joined the debate. From Redhill, Geoff Allan reports: "I was captain of an aircraft struck by lightning while descending into Bergen. We lost our navigation aids and compass system and relied on radar to get us in ...". Mr Allan says, however, that lightning strikes are now relatively rare – "not because there is less lightning, but because modern aircraft spend most of their time above clouds".

In the Fifties, writes a former pilot signing himself only "John", the risks were higher: "Twice in one week I was flying at night in a Lincoln, an improved version of the Lancaster bomber. On the first occasion, over the Bay of Biscay, the damage consisted of a hole in the starboard wing leading edge, large enough for the crew chief to get his head in (after we had landed), and the radio aerials were burnt off. Later, over the North Sea, the rear gun turret was struck: the cone-shaped flash eliminators on the machine guns were left drooping like melted candles."

Tom Dewis of Powys says that in a flying career of almost 40 years he had "more strikes than I would like to count. One was a case of ball-lightning, where a ball of apparent fire rolled through the cabin." Mr Dewis helpfully adds how you will know if you are in a plane caught in a thunderstorm and don't happen to see that ball of lightning roll past: "You may hear a hollow-sounding bump, followed by a slight smell of ozone. You've had a lightning strike! That's all."

Not quite all, writes Ronald Savage of Liverpool. "On our round-the-world tour in 1992, upon leaving Tokyo on a United Airlines DC10 we had just entered the clouds when there was a hell of a crack and flash shaking the aircraft somewhat (me with crossed legs). The pilot then confirmed we had been struck, but as there was no damage we could continue our flight to Bangkok."

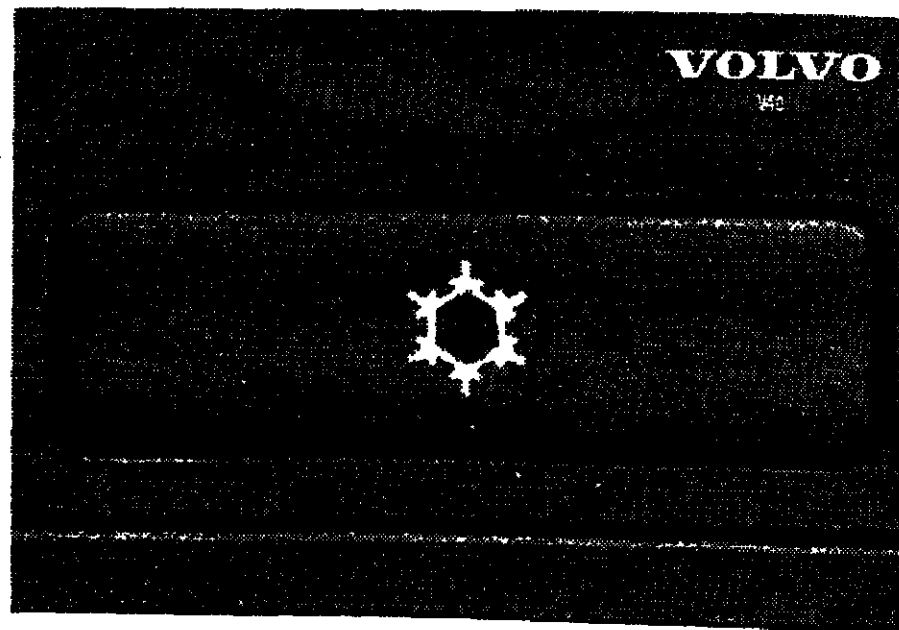
Back to Harriet's fear of flying course; Mr Foster signs off with a PS: "Frozen chickens are not fired into test engines; dead ones yes, but not frozen. Live birds in the sky may be bloody cold, but they are not stiff and solid." And the semi-anonymous John offers an equally chilling postscript: "My best wishes to Harriet. I was going to mention that some years later I was one of only two survivors in a mid-air collision of two jets in cloud – but I don't want to scare her."

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Modern Japan is ugly. Before going there I had seen photographs of the cherry blossom, the kimonos and the Kabuki theatre, and I had a love for the exquisite ceramics and the purity of design. But in Tokyo what impressed me most were the concrete and frosted glass, the skies darkened by skeins of cables and the brand-new reproductions of ancient monuments.

I left Tokyo and travelled. Kyoto, Okayama, Osaka, Nagasaki – the sameness stamped them all. Dissatisfied, I wondered what had happened to the poetry of Japan. Had it all been buried in concrete? At the time I was reading a book by an American, Alex Kerr, who wrote about an 18th-century thatched house he had lived in during the Seventies, in a Shangri-La high in the mountains of the Iya valley. The house was called Chiiori – House of the Flute. It sounded so idyllic, so different from anything else I had seen in Japan, that I decided to go there.

With my limited Japanese and my guidebook maps, it took two days to find Chiiori. The first night I spent out in the countryside in a Buddhist temple that doubled as a youth hostel. It was shut when I arrived, as it was a festival day, but I managed to persuade the monks to let me stay the night. The best part of the experience was the large, rectangular wooden bath made of scented pine. Steeping myself in the deep, hot water was pure heaven.

I spent most of the following day getting on the wrong trains and retracing my steps, but I was fixed on the idea of getting to Chiiori, and the more impossible it seemed, the more determined I was to get there. I asked everyone I met whether they knew the place, and showed them a crumpled piece of paper with "Chiiori" written on it. They all looked blank, until at last a bus driver took the paper in his white-gloved hand and nodded. I was on my way. It was late afternoon when I boarded the bus at Ikeda; at last I had a sense that I was on the brink of uncovering something real, something beautiful, in modern Japan.

The bus trundled along a mountain path, over a bridge and up into the Iya valley. The window framed a panorama of hills tufted with pines, broken by the occasional burst of cherry blossom and the distant, jade-green river below, with mists coming out of the deep throat of the gorge. All this was what I had hoped for, yearned for. Tokyo was a million light years away.

Two hours later we reached a fork in the road and the driver told me to get off and take the right-hand fork up the mountain. Abandoned vans and cars lined this road and I contemplated spending the night in one of them if a hotel did not miraculously present itself. A truck approached and I hitched a lift with two country girls in starched white bonnets. Eventually the truck stopped abruptly and the driver pointed to a half-hidden thatched roof below us. "House," he said, in faltering English.

A narrow path between the fields led to a squat, one-storey house topped by a stupendous roof, the rethatching of which had cost the owner such a fortune that he had moved out and abandoned Chiiori. There it stood, empty, with sliding paper doors slightly ajar and a pair of slippers on a stone. I changed into the slippers and slipped into the house. I could see, even in the engulfing darkness, that it was beautiful. The polished wooden floors

House in the rising sun

In a mystical cottage in a hidden valley, Deborah Nash discovered a Japan she thought had gone for ever



Japan still exists – if you know where to go Photographs: Thomas Hoepker/Magnum (above); Jean Mulatier/Frank Spooner Pictures

Getting there: British Airways (0845 222111) has just launched its best fare ever to Osaka or Tokyo, a World Offer of £299 return. This is valid for travel in June and must be booked by 10 June. All Nippon Airways has responded with some good-value fares to a range of Japanese destinations for £298 return.

Getting around: one of the best travel deals on the planet is a seven-day Japan Rail Pass, available for £195, including booking fee.

Getting information: Japanese National Tourist Organisation: 5th Floor, 20 Savile Row, London W1X 1AE (0171-734 9638). And see The Independent's Japan report on 27 May.



gleamed. A kettle hung above a sunken hearth. There was no furniture, just some baskets containing coal, a couple of lamps and a stick sculpture in an alcove.

Outside, the rain fell. For the first time in my life I really listened to that rain, to the different sound it made as it fell on earth, on rock and on pines. Chiiori overlooked pine trees, and beyond them a mist spotted with occasional fairy lights – the lights of cars in the valley below. Just as I was trying to plug the lights in, a middle-aged man, who I later learnt was a neighbour, arrived on the scene. I asked in mime whether I could stay the night and he agreed. He repeated the name "Chiiori" reverently, as though it were a prayer.

He brought out blankets from the back cupboard, switched on the lights, got a fire going and filled the kettle with water. Then he left. I turned to the book that had led me here, *Lost Japan*, and delighted in reading about the house that I was now sitting in, wrapped up in blankets. I read about Alex Kerr's discovery there of a young girl's diary. She had lived in Chiiori with her grandparents during the Fifties and had found the poverty and gloom of the Iya valley too much. When she was 18 the diary stopped; she had run away to the city. On the door the grandparents pasted a paper charm in the hope that she might come back some day. The paper charm was still there, and I felt a tangible link with the history of the house; I had made the journey in reverse, escaping the harsh neon lights of the city to take refuge in Chiiori.

I woke up early next day, swept the floor, which was coated in floating ash from the fire, and began my trip down the mountain. I hailed a lift from a young worker who spoke some English. It turned out that he knew Alex Kerr, and indeed was mentioned frequently in his book as the boy who loved digging, and who had helped thatch Chiiori's roof. He was now a construction worker and had travelled all over the world, digging tunnels. He dropped me off at the bus stop and gave me a canned drink of hot coffee from the vending machine. It was still raining.

At 8am the bus appeared, with the same driver from the night before. I arrived back at Ikeda reeking of smoke, damp and wood, and the waitress in the station cafe crinkled her nose as I ordered my slap-up meal of coffee, two slices of toast and egg on bean-sprouts. I sat back, content. Now I could really say I'd seen Japan.

Inside the giant electron

British Airways has announced the best-ever deal to Tokyo and back – £300 return. Simon Calder recommends the ultimate urban experience

"Never trust a city you can walk across in under an hour," a resident of Rio once warned me. She would place complete metropolitan faith in Tokyo: by some measures, the Japanese capital extends for 300 miles, to embrace Osaka in the world's greatest megalopolis. Even the most hardened city-dweller could find that scary – until you find yourself swept along in the swell of humanity surging through the city and discover that, up close, Tokyo looks after you like no other city.

The challenge is to decipher it. After several visits, I realised that the code is absurdly simple: a circular railway called Yamanote. Unlike London's Circle Line, the Yamanote is elevated. Take a couple of circuits to assess the city, and gasp at the staggering scale of Tokyo.

The security derives from the ease with which the city breaks down into small, manageable chunks. Around each Yamanote Line station clusters a community to be explored with safety.

As with the alphabet, each of the 26 components is pleasingly distinct.

And if you begin alphabetically at Akihabara, you'll start small, too. The first station north of the main Tokyo station gives access to a jumble of electronics shops furiously selling devices at prices that would put Dixon's out of business (with the pound strong against the yen, the temptation to exceed your £145 duty-free allowance will be a problem). A bit beyond the excessively bright lights, you can pace down intriguing arcades where commerce simmers more sedately, and where the neon is softened by an elegant crimson arc indicating a Buddhist shrine.

Board another anticlockwise train to Ikebukuro, Tokyo's closest trendy approximation to Camden (though the north London district has fewer tall buildings and, in my experience, not a single "capsule hotel"). If you were looking for some sort of edge in the Japanese capital, you might find it here. Wander around Rio wearing a bemused expression, and you are

almost bound to be robbed; try the same in Tokyo, and you are certain to be helped. Should you know exactly where you are going, smiling young people on street corners will hand you small packets of paper tissues. This is not an ancient tradition of hospitality but a marketing technique; like most of the available surfaces in Tokyo, the wrappers carry advertising.

That the Japanese capital is like nowhere else on earth becomes confirmed if you stay on the Yamanote to Shinjuku, and track down the Number One Building of the Metropolitan Government Office – which has a free viewing-platform on the 45th floor.

In wilful defiance of the tectonic plates that creak beneath Tokyo's surface, Shinjuku is an exercise in elevation. Skyscrapers crowd the foreground, causing eddies in the sea of humanity that washes around their bases. Yet even at ground level you do not feel like a humble electron on a giant circuit board. You probably feel like a walk.

How about a stroll across Tokyo, at least the central core as defined by the Yamanote Line? The journey could take most of the afternoon and evening. You may pause to spectate at Octopus Army in Harajuku, a shop where wayward Japanese youths express their uniform desire for individuality. Then wander through the serene cemetery of Aoyama.

As the sun slides through the heat haze towards where the horizon once lay, you can stumble down into Roppongi, Tokyo's stab at Soho sleaze. The first two ingredients of the sex/drugs/rock'n'roll recipe for indulgence appear to have eluded the Japanese, giving Roppongi a wholesomeness that the note-perfect Beatles tribute bands can only reinforce. In Rio, the later it gets, the more the temperature and tension rise. Nightfall in the Japanese capital calms the city and eases the heat. A breeze drifts in from Tokyo Bay, the flickering fades and the skyline settles into a fixed constellation of electric light. May it never be switched off.

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Ah, romantic Paris ... but this time with children. Don't panic, **Margaret St John** provides an essential guide, from fun trips to kids' cuisine



If it's sunny, I suggest you go immediately to the Eiffel tower. The problem is the queues: the round-trip to the top can take three hours. Do you really want to go up, when pollution and smog obscure the view? No child I know has ever asked to go to the top a second time. It's tricky, but if you can manage to persuade your children to go for a boat ride on the Seine when they have had their photograph taken below the Eiffel tower, I think you will have enjoyed this week.

After the boat trip, try walking up the avenue Marceau to the Arc de Triomphe – again, you may have difficulty avoiding

When I ask friends where they take their children for an evening meal in Paris, there is always an embarrassed admission that the place that works best is Hippopotamus. This chain does good food for children (menu, plus drink, balloon, colouring pencils and booklet, is 50F) and reasonable food for the oldies. Two other

The building itself, a converted railway station, is a treat. The Impressionist art does seem a bit squashed, but Degas's ballet dancers are always a hit with little girls.

Parisians love puppet shows, and although in French, the stories are easy to

Eurostar (0345 303030) has a special carriage for families, with tables for picnics and games. Baby-changing facilities are excellent. Use the lift at Waterloo; it's awkward on the escalators with children and buggies. In Paris, cheerful men help you on to the train. At Waterloo there is a £5 charge for this. Buy a carnet of Métro tickets at Waterloo; queues are long in Paris.

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Why go now?

Thirty days from today, Marseilles hosts England's first World Cup match – against, as luck would have it, Tunisia. This is a Mediterranean city that in parts is almost as north African as it is French. Today's city is a mix of historic buildings and modern developments of run-down and renovated, eyesore and beauty.

Beam down

The best availability at low fares is on Eurostar (0345 303030) from London Waterloo via Lille or Paris to Marseilles St-Charles station for £119 return. British Airways (0345 303030) flies three times daily from Gatwick to Marseilles, with a lowest return fare of £227.20 including tax. Flights arrive at the Marseilles Marignac airport west of the city, connected by bus (45F) every 20 minutes to the station.

Get your bearings

Marseilles is spread out and surprisingly hilly. Yet much of what you will want to see can be visited on foot, and there are also a metro system (two lines), a tramway and a decent bus network. South of the station stretch some 37km of seafront, with the Vieux Port at the heart, the modern docks to the west and the Corniche to the east.

The wide La Canabière cuts north-south through the centre of town. Although now full of discount stores and fast-food outlets, it was once the Champs-Élysées of the south, and a few grand remnants include the Bourse, which contains a maritime museum.

Check in

The best option is one of several hotels on the Vieux Port. The comfortable Tonic Hôtel (00 33 4 91 55 67 46) at 43 quai des Belges (double rooms 410F-590F) and the slightly simpler Hôtel Alizé (00 33 4 91 33 66 97) at 35 quai des Belges (rooms 295F-355F) are both agreeable. Make sure to ask for a room with a view of the port if you want an eye on to local life. The modern Hôtel Sofitel (00 33 4 91 15 59 00), out by the fortress at 36 boulevard Charles Livon, is more luxurious and spacious, at 660F-960F a night, but less convenient.

Architecture buffs will want to stay somewhere rather different: the hotel located among the flats inside Le Corbusier's influential Unité d'Habitation (00 33 4 91 16 78 00), built in 1952 in the eastern suburbs, at 280 boulevard Michelet. Its sculptural roof can be seen from afar; up close it is marked by the primary colours on the balconies and the giant V-shaped concrete pilots. Rooms cost 190F-285F a night, or you can simply eat lunch in the restaurant.

A hike

Begin a stroll around Old Marseilles with the Vieux Port. This is now a yachting marina but is still the core of the city, with its fortresses enclosing either end and quays lined with cafés, ships' chandlers and restaurants.

The Stade Vélodrome, home to Marseilles' adored football team Olympic Marseille (and the England vs Tunisia game) may be on the hills to the north east, but supporters still parade round here after matches and there's even now an OM Café on the quay.

You can nip across the harbour in a little ferry shuttle (3F), in pretty much the same time it takes to walk. Take a look at the decorative 17th-century Mairie (town hall) on the quai du Port. Beyond here the western side of the port was bombed in the war, but in the basement of one of the new buildings, opened as the Roman Docks Museum (place Vivaux, open Tuesday to Sunday, 11am-6pm), you can look down on the excavations of a Roman warehouse.

For an interesting insight into today's Marseilles, explore the narrow streets north of the broad Cours Belsunce. Here you might think yourself in a north African city, with its Arab grocers, cafés where an all-male clientele watches TV, and decrepit-looking hotels.

Then climb up between the rue de la République and the quai du Port to explore the historic quartier du Panier. Although the houses are beginning to be restored, this area of melting-pot Marseilles, where French, Moroccans and Africans live side by side, can still feel slightly dodgy – with the occasional burnt-out car hidden down an alley.

At the top is the beautiful Centre de la Vieille-Charité (2 rue de la Vieille-Charité), now a collection of museums and well worth visiting for its architecture alone. A three-storey arcade surrounds

You don't need to be a football fan to visit Marseilles in the next month. The Mediterranean port is also the home of bouillabaisse, eye-opening architecture, comfortable hotels – and too many museums to visit in a weekend. Natasha Edwards makes a selection



Reflections of Marseilles: the city is a mix of ancient and modern, eyesores and beauties

Photographs: Stéphane Compoin/Sygma

a central courtyard with strikingly austere oval domed chapel in the centre, built 1671-1741 and the only major surviving work of Pierre Puget, court architect to Louis XIV.

Between the Vieille-Charité and the modern docks is Marseilles' cathedral, actually two cathedrals side by side, one (the Vieille-Major) a fortified medieval basilica, its replacement (the Nouvelle-Major) a garish neo-Byzantine extravagance, dating from the late 19th century when the port prospered after the opening of the Suez Canal.

Lunch on the run

Stop for a quick salad or a quiche at l'Art et des Thés (00 33 4 91 14 58 71), the café within the Vieille-Charité complex (open noon-6pm). The room is very simple, but the setting is beautiful and the outdoor tables are perfect for relaxing.

A cultural afternoon

Marseilles has an astonishing number of museums, and you're not going to get round all of them. Make a start with the Centre de la Vieille-Charité, home to two important museums: the Museum of Mediterranean Archaeology, noted for its Greek and Roman artefacts and for its Egyptian department, and the Museum of African, Oceanic and American-Indian Arts, a collection of sculpture and masks, skulls and Mexican popular art (both open Tuesday to Sunday, 11am-6pm).

On the other side of the Vieux Port, visit the Musée Cantini (19 rue Grignan, open Tuesday to Sunday, 11am-6pm). The pretty, late-18th-century mansion is the perfect setting for a small but high-quality collection of modern art including Dufy, Ernst, Léger and Matisse.

Liquid culture

The café beckons, and the local *apéro* is pastis. The blend of star anise and herbs is an acquired taste, but one that's easier to acquire on a terrace in Marseilles (perhaps the fashionable New York or Bar de la Marine on the Vieux Port) than in a Paris café or a London pub. Anyway, the best bit is watching the liquid turn from gold to cloudy yellow when you add water.

Fisherman's dinner

If there's one dish inextricably associated with Marseilles, it is bouillabaisse. Much more than just a fish soup, this is a full meal, usually served first as a soup with garlic, croûtons and rouille, followed by the assorted fish and shellfish (a mixture of at least five varieties that has to include *ruscade* – scorpion fish) and saffron-tinted potatoes, preferably complemented by the white wine of neighbouring Cassis.

Ask any Marseillais(e) and they'll tell you that you can't get a real bouillabaisse anywhere else. They'll also tell you it should be ordered at least 24 hours in advance – and will probably inform you that the one you've just eaten wasn't the real thing. Splurge out at the Miramar (00 33 4 91 91 10 40), a chic Fifties brasserie at 12 quai du Port, which has a much better reputation than the tourist restaurants that line rue Thiers behind the quai de Rive Neuve.

Sunday morning: go to church

Work up an appetite with a steep climb up the steps (the lazy can take the bus up and walk down) to the Église Notre Dame de la Garde. Perched on the top of a hill, the wondrously ugly, striped marble church, built under the Second Empire, is visible from most of the city – with a gigantic gilded statue of the Virgin on the roof and an interior full of *ex voto* plaques of thanks from those she has miraculously saved.

On the way down, visit the much more historic Abbaye St-Victor, behind a fortified facade. Again, this is two churches on top of each other, with the 11th-to-13th-century church sitting over a labyrinth of crypts housing carved sarcophagi from the third and fourth centuries.

Mediterranean lunch

It's not easy to find a restaurant open for Sunday lunch, but a popular and good-value local spot is Chez Soi (00 33 4 91 54 25 41) at 5 rue Papère, just off La Canabière in a former dairy, the place for bistro favourites such as leg of lamb and crème caramel.

Icing on the cake

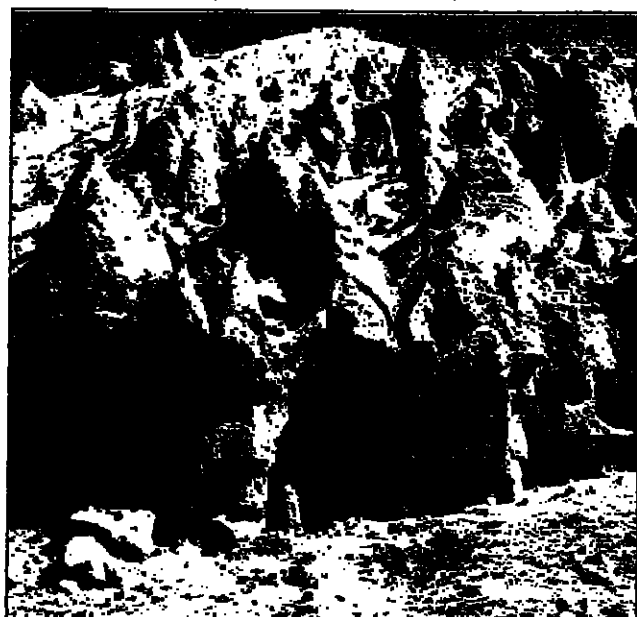
Finish your visit with a whiff of sea air and a panoramic view of Marseilles in a boat trip from the harbour. Two quickie visits leave from the quai des Belges: the Île d'If with the 16th-century fortress prison that inspired Alexandre Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo* and, just beyond, the Îles de Frioule, which, apart from a small marina and a few holiday flats and cafés by the jetty, are mainly windswept rock dotted with clumps of rosemary and thyme – a fragrant reminder that you're in the Med.

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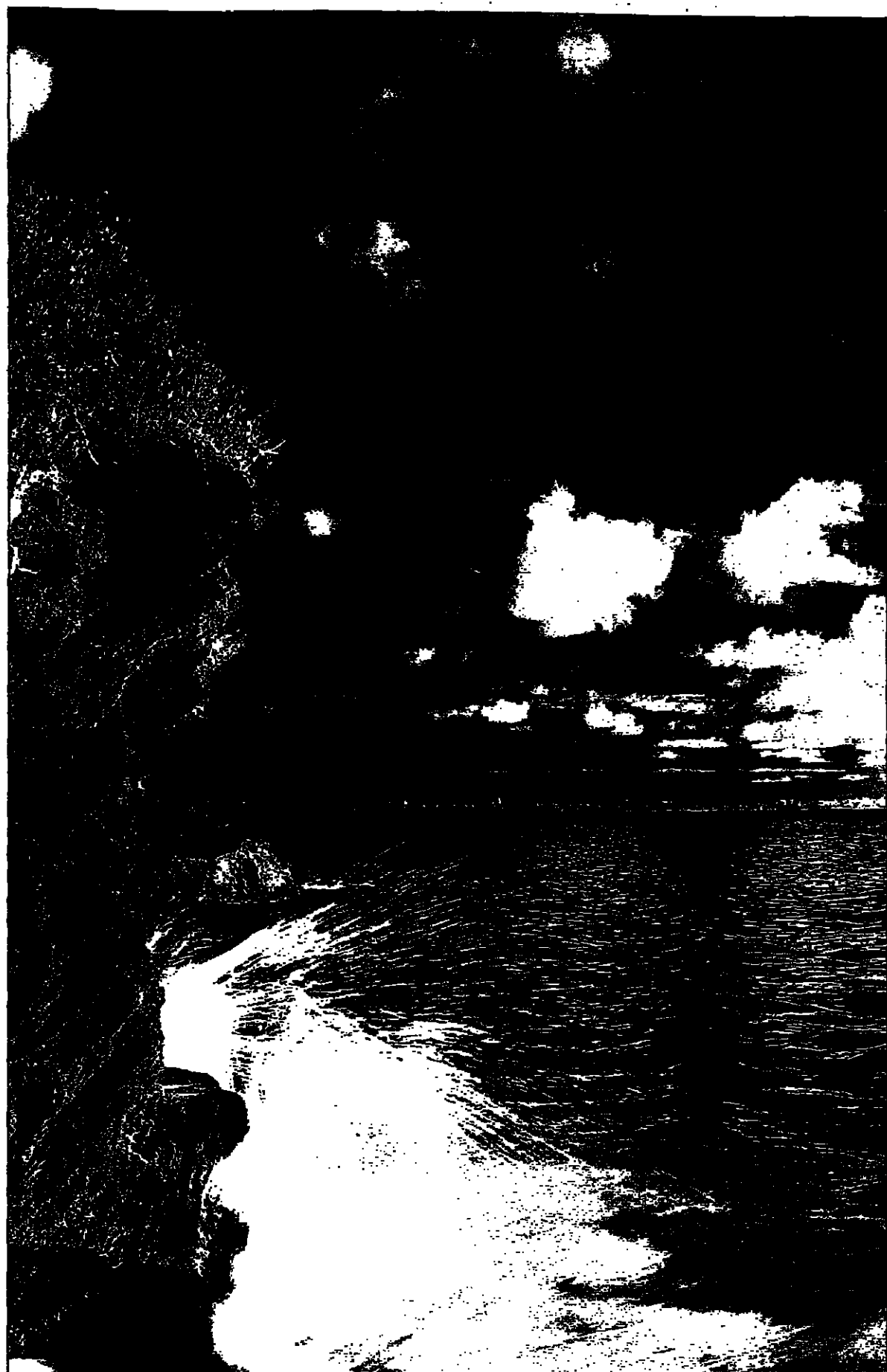
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Cornwall drifts to the mid-Atlantic

West country meets Switzerland in the middle of an ocean? Hamish McRae explores Bermuda



Bermuda: with 60,000 people on 21 square miles, the sea substitutes countryside Photograph: Tony Stone Images

Imagine an island surrounded by coral reefs, with about the highest standard of living in the world, with no income tax or corporation tax, and an hour-and-a-half's flying time to three of the world's most sophisticated cities. Any idea? A hint: it is a British colony. Still not there? All right, it is Bermuda.

Bermuda is not a common destination for Britons and virtually all the half-million tourists it receives each year are Americans. We tend to think of it, if we think of it at all, as a Caribbean island, whereas it is in fact 1,000 miles north of the Caribbean, stuck out on its own in the middle of the Atlantic. That means that its climate is much wetter and cooler than that of the West Indies, and that it is therefore principally a summer holiday destination rather than a winter one. Yes, you can lie on a beach in winter, but you will have to wait for a dry and not too windy day. Yes, you can snorkel the reefs, but in winter you would probably want to wear a wetsuit.

So why go? It is easy to see why Americans go. It is quick and relatively cheap to fly there from any of the big east coast cities: New York, Boston and Washington. It is also, to Americans, exotic. It feels different. It is tiny - 25 miles long - and for most of its length it is just a few hundred yards wide. There are narrow little roads with cars driving on the left, neatly cropped hedges, pastel-painted cottages - half-close your eyes, and it could be Cornwall. Visitors are not allowed to rent cars, so they have the novel experience of riding around on scooters or taking buses. It's not at all like life in the US.

The island's colonial status is also an attraction. Unlike virtually all the other former colonies it seems happy with this status, having voted nearly three to one to remain so in 1995. In fact it is the only colony of any size we have left, now that Hong Kong has gone, with 60,000 of Britain's remaining 100,000 or so colonial subjects living there. It also has the second oldest British settlement in the western hemisphere, a town called St George, founded in 1612, a few years after Jamestown in Virginia. Unlike Jamestown, which has been reconstructed as a museum, St George has been in continuous occupation, and the oldest buildings date back to the 17th and early 18th centuries.

So Americans get a glimpse both of a foreign culture and of their own history. But they

can use their own dollars, which are legal tender and pegged one-to-one with Bermudian dollars, speak their own language and enjoy all the amenities of a country with the standard of living of Switzerland. Bliss.

For Britons the attraction is less obvious. We were there for a financial conference rather than a holiday - Bermuda is a big insurance centre. To the first-time British visitor the place seems extraordinarily built up. Pack 60,000 people on to an island of 21 square miles, give them all houses with gardens and you have no room for country. Instead you have continuous suburbia, interspersed by the occasional golf course. Bermuda is also expensive for a holiday destination. As residents pay no income tax and there is no company taxation the revenue has to be raised somehow, and the government does that with import duties. There are also taxes on visitors, with even cruise visitors who sleep in their ships having to pay a nightly tax. Add in the fact that wages are high and you end up paying London prices, plus a bit. The quality of the service is excellent, but cheap Bermuda is not.

However, Britons and Americans alike get two incomparable attractions: the sea and the people. The sea substitutes for countryside. The Bermudian sailing races are legendary, the dinghy races in particular: a little 14ft tradi-

tionally built boat, with an enormous mast, a massive sail area and a crew of six or seven to try to keep the thing upright. If you need to lighten the boat during a race, apparently you dump a couple of the crew overboard.

Our own exploits were more modest: a rented motorboat to spin out to a wreck, HMS *Viper*, the navy's first twin screw warship, where my intrepid spouse and daughter snogged some wetsuits. Bermuda has a brilliant line in wrecks. That was how the British arrived, when the *Sea Venture*, under Sir George Somers, was wrecked in 1609 en route for Virginia. Bermuda has accumulated about 300 wrecks, ranging from Spanish galleons to *The Constellation*, made famous by Peter Benchley's book *The Deep*. For anyone interested in snorkelling or diving Bermuda is a started alpha location, because aside from its wrecks it also has particularly interesting coral - the most northerly reefs in the western hemisphere.

The other extraordinary feature is the charm of the people. Just as Parisians have developed rudeness to an art form, so Bermudians have developed politeness. It is considered extremely rude to pass someone in the street without greeting them; the politeness is catching and you end up saying good afternoon every few seconds to locals and visitors alike. To the visitor, at least, there is no evident racial tension between the 65 per cent mostly black population and the 35 per cent mostly white. There are big wealth differences, but there is no poverty and little unemployment. The impression is one of easy egalitarianism. To anyone familiar with the Caribbean this is refreshing and delightful. I found myself wondering how other societies could achieve this self-reinforcing "critical mass" of politeness; if Bermudians could put it into a bottle and export it, Bermuda would dominate the world market.

As it is, you have to go there to experience it. A long way from London? Yes. An expensive location? Sure. Uneven weather? True. A touch of make-believe about it all? I suppose so. But the charm helped make for four of the nicest days of my life.

The only airline with direct flights to Bermuda from Britain is British Airways (0345 222111). The lowest fare for travel between June and September is £738 return. Bermuda Tourism: 1 Battersea Church Road, London SW11 3LY (0171-771 7001).

THE KNEES HAVE IT

Bermuda Shorts are the main (well - the only) contribution of the island to the fashion industry. They were developed from British tropical military wear and are used for formal occasions as well as informal. The classic business attire consists of a blue, blazer-style jacket, a white shirt with a tie, tailored shorts ending between three and four inches above the knee, knee-length socks and black formal shoes. The shorts can be in any colour except that of the jacket; and the socks must tone with either the jacket or the shorts. Bermuda shorts are completely acceptable at a business meeting. Go to a convention, and never in your life will you see so many male knees.

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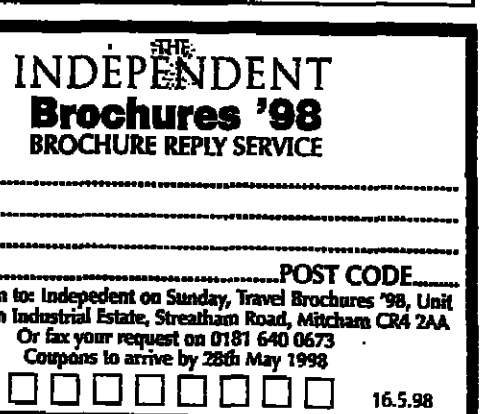
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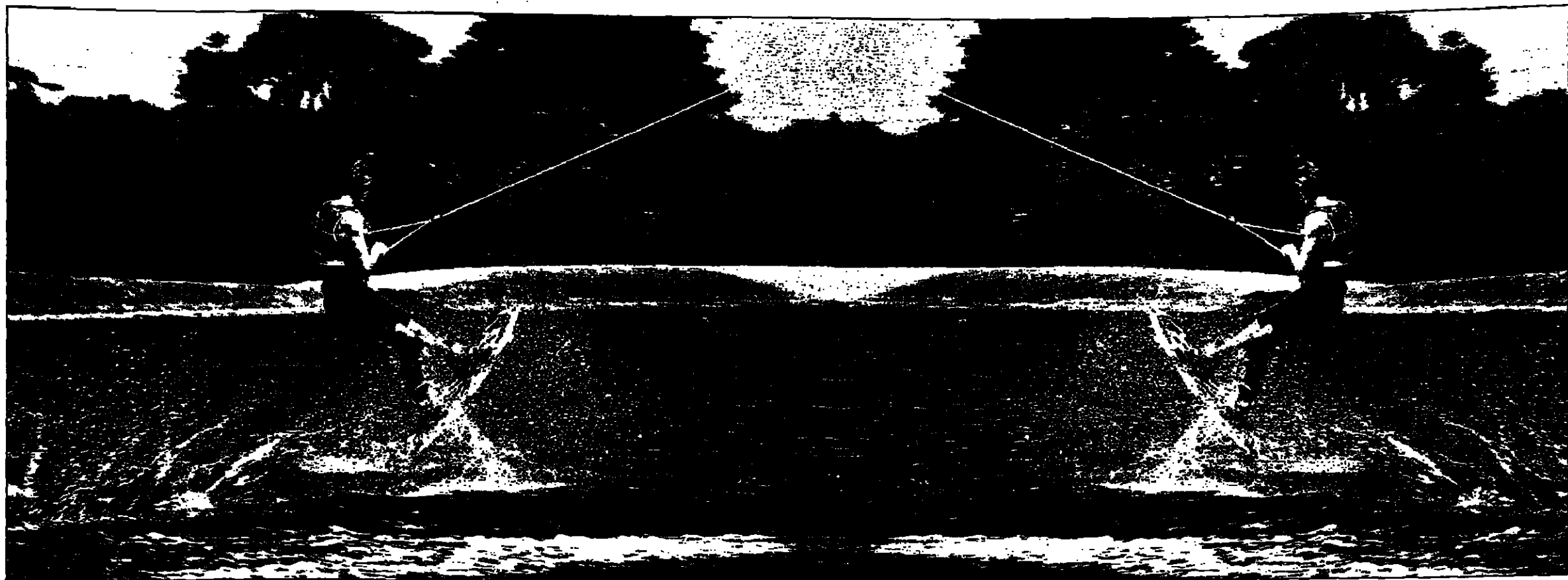
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On the up: wakeboarding may be easy once you're up - but starting is a challenge. Photographs: Penny Kendall

Just stand sideways and jump

Kneeling on an oversized swimming-float towed by a cable to hurdle round a lake at 20mph, you're on the way to wakeboarding, the hippest thing you can do this summer - with or without clothes on. But there'll be lots of falling off and lungfuls of lake water before you can do tricks on a real board. And though performing is what it's all about, for now you just concentrate on staying upright.

Wakeboarding is to waterskiers what snowboarding is to snow skiers: the new kid on the block, standing sideways just to be different and, as it happens, to do all kinds of amazing stunts. It is irritatingly popular and can attract the kind of person who wears baggy shorts over a wetsuit. But rather than take over traditional waterskiing territory, it comes hand-in-hand with an alternative way to ski on water: the cable tow. This drag-lift-round-a-lake is the new, cost-effective way to go.

With a cable tow, not only can lots of people ski together on a small stretch of water, it has also changed the way you ride. There's no boat, so there's no wake to play on, but the upward pull of the overhead

It's like high-performance waterskiing but without the boat. Eric Kendall tries to stay upright on a wake-board

cable that tows you makes life easier and improves jumping potential for experts. It can run continuously, towing lots of people round a confined body of water, turning the sport into an all-day participation and spectator event, rather than now-you-see-it-now-you-don't boat skiing, where the action disappears over the horizon faster than you can say "How much? For 10 minutes?"

As you learn the basics on a wakeboard, there are a few things to get used to: launching and staying on, in that order. The starting procedure feels like a cross between ritual humiliation and execution. With the board on a launch-pad of wet plastic bristles, you adopt the kneeling Superman position, having fastened a broad Velcro strap across your knees. The slack tow line is out in front of you, with the handle clutched in your fists; your knuckles should have drained to white at this point. Despite the impression that you'll be pulled flat on your face, it's more likely that you'll go over back-

wards, so keeping this weight-forward position, you wait for your turn to come. If it sounds uncomfortable, that's because it is, but wait until you've done a couple of laps.

When the pull comes, it takes you by surprise, however ready you think you are. If your weight's not bang on, you instantly leave the kneeboard, flying through the air and enjoying the brisk acceleration and sensation of wingless flight - but aware that it will be a short ride and that the water will be cold.

Get it together the next time, and you wobble into the first straight, gaining confidence, even trying to slalom while aiming in the general direction of the two white buoys that indicate the first turn.

You don't really need to do anything to turn - you go where it tows you, which makes it sound easy. A gentle turn would be a cinch, but the sharper they come, the more you decelerate into them, allowing the rope to go slack, which can only mean

you're in for a mini-repeat of the start, only somehow worse.

First time around the final, most aggressive corner, before you've learnt to absorb the pull and find the best line, you're bound to lose it, resulting in a high-speed ejection, landing smack on your face. But the most impressive bit is the yank itself, as I bobbed around afterwards in my life-jacket I was convinced I'd see my arms disappearing across the lake, still attached to the ski-line.

The next step is to try to stand, either on two skis or straightaway on a wakeboard, which opens up the scope for going backwards and sideways, doing somersaults, jumps, and whatever takes your fancy. It's easy once you're up, I'm assured, but starting is a challenge. The fact that everyone else, eight-year-olds included, leaps from the jetty in a flamboyant, extravagant version of the humble launch you're struggling with is more a put-down than an inspiration. You can't expect to run before you can walk, they remind you. Never mind all that; a crawl would be nice, just to be going on with.

LEARNING THE ROPES

Princes Club, Middlesex (01784 256153) is within 30 minutes of London by train and has the lot: four ski lakes and an 800-metre cable tow that can take eight skiers at once. Slalom skiing is still popular, but wake-boards are the thing, with unlimited scope for tricks and stunts or just an easy ride. All equipment - wetsuit, lifejacket, kneeboard, skis and wake-board - can be hired; a two-hour session costs £15 plus £1 each for wetsuit and lifejacket hire.

Cable tows are the future of the sport, putting more people on the water for less money. The Princes Club school scheme, sponsored by LH Supplies and SportsMatch (a government body) has put waterskiing and wakeboarding on to the curriculum for the first time and spawned the British junior wake-board

champion and European Tour record holder, 11-year-old Ben Hitch. Other stars, such as Stuart Marston, British national champion, can be seen in action from the excellent lakeside club facilities.

There are four other cable tows around England: Thorpe Park (01932 561071), Aqua Active Cable Ski, Rother Valley, Sheffield (0114 251 1777), AquaskiSkegness (01754 761025), and the National Training Centre, Nottingham (015 981 816). Details are also available from the British Water-Ski Federation (0171 833 2855). Within easy reach of the cross-channel ferry is Noeux les Mines, near Arras in northern France (Pas de Calais tourist board, 0033 2183 3259), which has a lake with a cable tow, to complement the plastic ski slope that has been built on one of its slag heaps.

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The Cotswold coup

Mellow stone walls, teashops, postcard-pretty houses – that's Burford. And it's also the birthplace of Britain's first socialist movement, celebrated today, writes Rob Stepney

Let it only be whispered in the Cotswold cream teashops of Burford High Street, but this prosperous town that now lies so peacefully in the valley of the Windrush was once the centre of a bloody insurrection that might have changed the history of England.

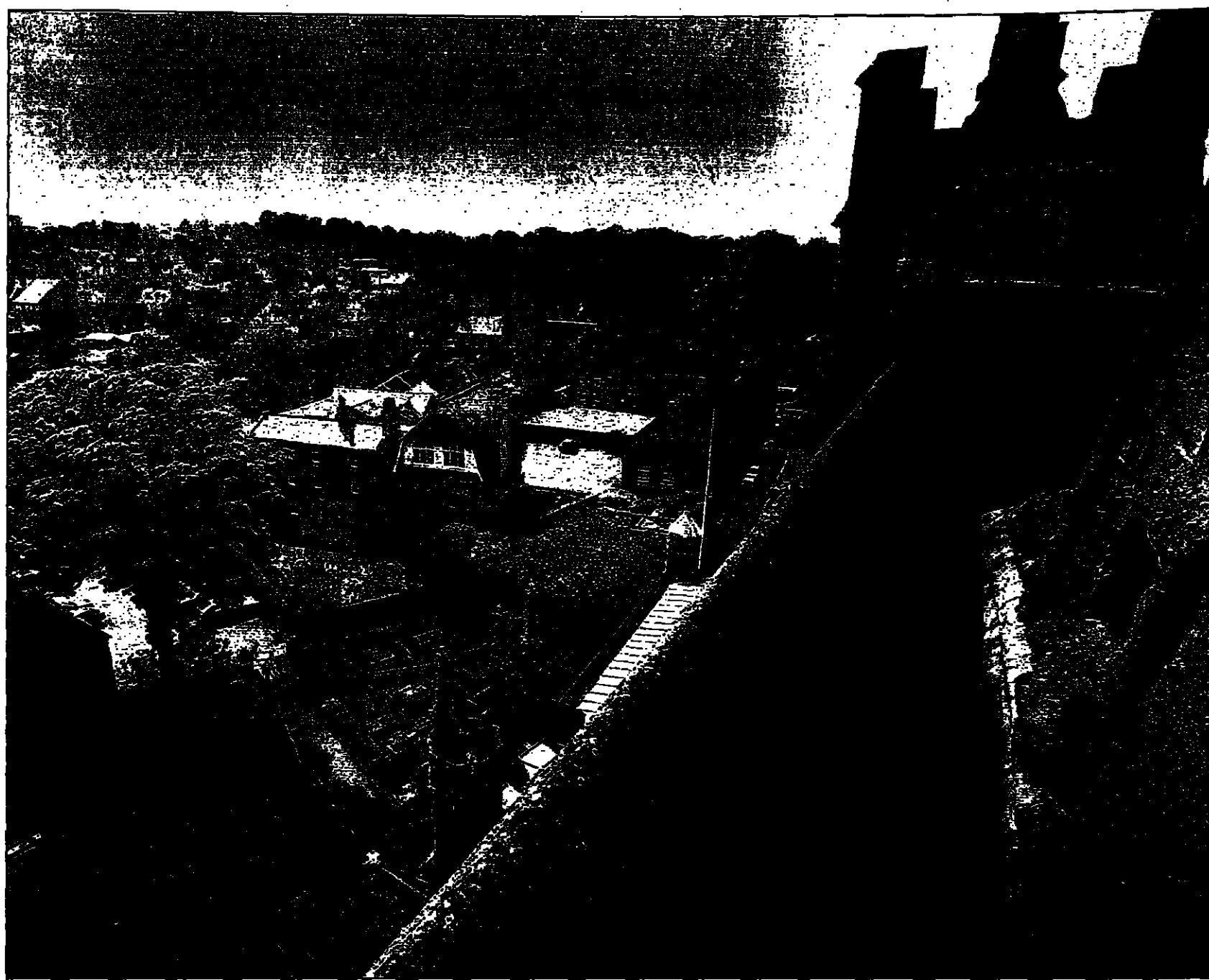
The revolt of dissident "Leveller" troops from Oliver Cromwell's victorious army aimed to push the government into reforms that would have transformed post-Civil War society. The radical democratic rebellion in fact ended in imprisonment and death. But the places associated with the events of three-and-a-half centuries ago add unexpected interest to this mellow, wisteria-walled town. They also provide the focus for an unusual annual celebration by groups who feel the Levellers' impetus towards radical change has not yet been exhausted.

It was on a May evening in 1649. The scene by the church was much as today (except for the distant dangle of the rape fields). Overlooked by the dogtoothed Norman tower and massive spire, the watermeadows across the mill stream were probably bright with buttercups and cow parsley. Then there came the sound of men on horses, almost a thousand of them, as Burford was overwhelmed by mutinous troops.

For years, the people of the town had experienced the ebb and flow of Royalist and Parliamentary forces, cowering from occasional firefights that left dead in the streets, but more typically enduring the casual oppressions of what seemed like an occupying force, from whichever side it came. That said, the Civil War was over, King Charles already dead. And not many Burford inhabitants would have understood why soldiers were once again in their streets.

Arrears of pay had eroded loyalty. But what led these Cromwellian troops to outright mutiny was an ideal of democracy that was more than a century ahead of its time, and would not be countenanced by those the Civil War brought to power. Leveller beliefs eventually found lasting expression in the declarations that accompanied the American Revolution. But for the rank and file rebels that spring night, the future held only imprisonment and, for three of their leaders, the firing squad.

Thinking they were safe from pursuit in Burford, the mutineers posted few guards. Troops loyal to Cromwell surprised them



Levellers' last stand: Burford, left; 'socialist' celebrations, above
Main photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

BURFORD BEAUTIES

Apart from Levellers' Day, the attractions of this picture-postcard town include the high street, the little Tolsey Museum (open Mon-Thurs, 2pm-5pm; Fri, Sat and Sun, 11am-5pm, adults 50p, children 10p) which gives a lively insight into local history, and Sheep Street with its fine 15th- and 16th-century houses built with money from the wool trade. However, in summer it is essential to get to Burford early in the day, before the crowds descend. Those with children in tow could then escape the throng and make for the Cotswold Wildlife Safari Park (open daily, 10am-5pm; adults £5.50, children 3-15, £3.50) just south of Burford. Slightly further afield, near Witney, is the wonderful Victorian farm and manor house, Cogges Manor Farm (Tues-Fri, 10.30am-4.30pm, Sat and Sun, 12pm-4.30pm; adults £3.25, children 3-16 £1.75).

during the night. There was skirmishing, and one attacker was killed by rebels defending the Crown high-street pharmacy. But those who did not escape in the darkness soon surrendered.

On the lead-lined foot of Burford church is an inscription, worn but legible. It reads "Anthony Sedley, 1649, Prisoner", with the "n" reversed, painstakingly etched with the tip of a knife during three days of incarceration. Sedley survived. But on 17 May three leaders of the Levellers were executed by Cromwell's musketeers. The likely place was against the high part of the churchyard wall, though the holes notionally made by musket balls should not be trusted.

Today, wreaths will be laid at the memorial on the church, and "The Red Flag" will be sung. This is only a part of the day's commemoration, organised by the Levellers' Day Committee of the Oxford Workers' Educational Association. There will also be speeches in the old church hall, a procession down the high street, Morris dancing, family picnics, and the possibility of adjournment to a good pub, of which there are several. But the question remains why "The Red Flag"? Twenty-five years ago, after centuries of neglect, the memory of the Levellers was renewed by Oxford socialists. Tony Benn is unofficial patron of Levellers' Day, and Ken Livingstone has been a speaker at the annual event.

Such celebration has not always found favour with some sections of the Burford community. There was a time in the Eighties when a rival booking of the church hall was planned to frustrate the organisers of Levellers' Day, and when the singing of

"The Red Flag" was countered by a rendering of "Rule, Britannia". Happily, the animosity of those days has disappeared. "Relations with Burford town council are now friendly," says David Lewis, who has for many years helped organise Levellers' Day. "The police, too, are understanding. They treat the brief interruption to traffic caused by our high-street parade as a slow-moving vehicle."

"In remembering people in the past who fought and suffered for their beliefs, we can provide others with inspiration," he continues. "The message is that you're not alone." But the question of who should really inherit the spirit of the Levellers is still a live local issue. The Burford historian Raymond Moody argues that the executed soldiers Cornet Thompson, Corporal

Perkins and Private Church would turn in their unmarked graves at those who come to lay their wreaths.

"With the Levellers' emphasis on the sanctity of private property and resistance to state interference, I can't understand why they should have become a left-wing icon," he says. "Simply because they were on the side of the underdog did not mean that they were the forerunners of socialism." It was their faith in God and not the class struggle that gave these men the courage to bare their chests to the firing party that May morning, he argues.

What did the mutinous rebel soldiers who marched on Burford in fact demand? The Levellers' "Agreement of the Free People of England", smuggled out of prison earlier that month, called for the right to vote for all men who worked independently

for a living; free trade; the abolition of the House of Lords; elected judges; and secure title to land for small farmers. Despite the "Leveller" name coined by their political enemies, there was no hint in their programme of the common ownership of property or means of production.

Raymond Moody continues: "The Levellers' beliefs also sprang from the view that the problems of England derived from pernicious laws imposed on the people by foreigners – the 'Norman Yoke' – and it is an irony that Levellers' Day this year will be addressed by someone from the European Parliament."

Moody also finds it intriguing that men whose political ideals were so firmly linked with a non-conformist Christian conscience should be celebrated by a movement with an essentially atheist ideology.

A piece of Powys that passeth all understanding

The Elan valley, a hidden gem of Wales, offers its few visitors rare treats of scenery and wildlife. By Daniel Butler

Overcrowding in some of our most beautiful landscapes is reaching crisis point. As the temperatures rise, so columns of townsfolk wind into Dartmoor, the Peaks and the Dales, all intent on experiencing "unspoilt wilderness". The irony, of course, is that in summer the "wastes" that thrilled Boswell, Wordsworth and Hardy are likely to be gridlocked.

For all that, though, there are still hidden gems, and the Elan valley is one of them. Extend a straight line from London through Oxford, Cheltenham and Hereford, and shortly before reaching Aberystwyth you find yourself in the joyful emptiness of eastern Powys. Given the valley's beauty and its comparative proximity to well populated areas (it is

only two hours from Birmingham or Bristol), it may be surprising that the area is so under-visited. It certainly wasn't always so.

Shelley was among the first visitors: he fled here to his uncle's house after being sent down from Oxford, and was so taken with the wild beauty that he tried to set up a writers' commune nearby. The Victorians agreed with him, founding a string of spa towns along the eastern edge of the mountains that form the backbone of Wales (Llanwrtyd, Llangamarch, Builth and Llandrindod all boast the epithet "Wells"). Yet the area's popularity has waned, and left it with one of the lowest per capita incomes in Britain.

For the handful of visitors who do stumble across it, the rewards are significant. The backdrop of the Cambrian mountains are formed from some of the oldest rocks in Britain and come with a desolate beauty of their own, different from that of the better known crags of north Wales and the Lake District.

A century ago the entire catchment of the valley was bought by the Corporation of Birmingham, anxious for a reliable source of drinking water. In an ambitious engineering project, four huge dams and a 73-mile pipe were built to supply a mushrooming Midlands population. By modern standards these massive stone edifices are beautiful, if austere, and heavy rain makes them truly spectacular, cloaking them white with millions of gallons of cascading water. Thanks to this and deserted mountain roads, the area features heavily in car and mobile phone advertisements (not to

mention the recent TV series *Mortimer's Law*).

In contrast to other reservoir projects, the dams have been an environmental godsend. In the cause of water purity, the authorities have always kept a tight leash on human activity, beginning by evicting some 400 tenants

face restrictions on stocking and chemical use, but when it comes to visitors the picture is ambiguous. On the one hand there is an excellent visitor centre and an effective "freedom to roam" policy; but water sports, camping and off-road driving are banned. In addition, the Trust seems

drawn by red kites, peregrines, redstarts and golden plovers; others hope for a glimpse of polecats, otters and badgers – and the rare upland orchids found in the unimproved hay meadows. Another great attraction is the "friendly" nature of the hills, quite unlike the precipitous peaks of Scotland and the Lakes. And the views from the tops are still breathtaking: on a clear day the panorama stretches from the Black Mountains to Snowdonia.

Outdoor activities are not confined to hikers – this is one of the few hilly areas in the country where you can plan a relatively gentle cycle tour through spectacular scenery. And if even this seems too energetic, flyfishing for the monster brown trout that lurk in the lakes is

cheap and easily arranged. Finally, it's worth noting that the area is pervaded by a genuinely friendly atmosphere. Be prepared for gentle gossip with the newsgatherer and pub locals, all curious as to how on earth you heard about the place.

Getting there by public transport, the Elan valley is difficult to reach. The railway station at Llandrindod Wells, on the Heart of Wales line, is about 12 miles east. There are sporadic buses.

Being there: the Elan Valley Hotel (run by former actors, 01597 810448) is two miles south west of Rhayader. B&B costs £24-£30 per person. Bikes, ponies and fishing can be arranged from here. Kitewatchers Wildlife Breaks (01597 811169) has a variety of guided tours.

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Where there's muck ...

... there's a beak. Malcolm Smith reports from the nation's sewage farms, where all kinds of birds are circling and salivating

What do these four have in common: Nottingham, Cambridge, Perry Oaks and Wisbech? Not the sort of question for a prime-time TV quiz show, perhaps. Not even a question that will elicit a correct answer from more than a tiny proportion of the million-plus members of the RSPB. But ask a keen birdwatcher of a certain age what these places have in common, and he or she won't hesitate. Sewage works, of course.

Muck is magic for birds. Especially this sort of muck. Many of today's senior ornithologists cut their teeth as birdwatchers - and developed their identification skills - surrounded by percolating filters, humus tanks, settling lagoons and the other paraphernalia that convert the end products of human bodily functions into (almost) pure water. Wagtails making the most of the clouds of tiny black sewage flies; flocks of finches devouring piles of tomato and other pass-through-your-gut seeds; snipe and monotonously churring grasshopper warblers in the damp, lagoon-side vegetation; even occasional rarities such as a lesser yellowlegs visiting from North America, attracted, perhaps, by the all-organic diet.

But, if old birdwatching hands used to check their Ordnance Survey maps for the telltale "wks" symbol (usually denoting a sewage works), most of today's twitchers gain their spurs by tearing about the country having been alerted to the latest rarity on their mobile phones. Not that technology can be blamed exclusively for the demise of the sewage farm birdwatchers' logbooks.

"Sewage farms aren't as popular with young birdwatchers because these have switched from being wetland habitats to something more like industrial plants," comments David Glue, of the British Trust for Ornithology. Glue, with Dennis Bodenham and Frances Bowman, two BTO members, have been visiting Aylesbury works and studying its birds for the last 27 years.

How important sewage farms were for birdwatchers learning their trade, from the

SEWAGE STAKE-OUT

The best bits of a sewage works for birds (based on Aylesbury) in descending order of merit. Information from a 27-year study by Glue, Bodenham and Bowman.

Sprinklers and percolating filters: year-round water and food for thousands of starlings and pied wagtails; at other times for yellow wagtails, gulls and meadow pipits.

Wet grassland irrigation areas: nesting spots for reed buntings, warblers, ducks; even snipe and water rails.

Storm and humus tanks: good for wagtails and, at times of shallow water, for wading birds, chiffchaffs, rock pipits and even rare black redstarts.

Lagoons: breeding spots for little grebes, mallard and moorhen; occasionally tufted ducks and kingfishers.

Hedges and scrub: nesting places for blackbirds, wrens, warblers and others.

Buildings and machinery: nesting for house sparrows, wagtails, sometimes even kestrels and little owls.

Lawns: feeding for wagtails, green woodpeckers and thrushes.

Rubbish heaps: vegetable wastes and seeds attract pheasants, stock doves, magpies and flocks of finches.

Twenties up until the Sixties, can be gauged from the autobiography of one of the founding fathers of British ornithology. In *Seventy Years of Birdwatching* (Poyser, 1974), the late HG Alexander wrote: "The years between the two Great Wars might be described as the years of reservoirs and sewage farms so far as British field ornithology is concerned."

The attractiveness of the old-fashioned sewage farm, with its extensive muddy settling beds for migrating waders, came later.

Probably Norman Joy, of Reading, first made this discovery when he began to report the remarkable waders, including four black-winged stilts hitherto only known as birds of coastal marshes and mudflats, that he had found on an unnamed "marsh" near Reading. Later that year (1923) he revealed that this was Reading sewage farm.

The most attractive sewage farms, such as Northampton and Nottingham, and some of those near London (Perry Oaks being an example) were only discovered in the late Twenties or early Thirties. David Lack, in his *Birds of Cambridgeshire* (1934) hardly gives any sewage farm records before 1927. By 1934, he was able to reveal that 152 species had been recorded at Cambridge sewage farm.

But if many of the old-fashioned sewage farms have disappeared their modern replacements can still be important oases for birds at all seasons. David Glue points out that birds such as starlings, tree sparrows and linnet - all in decline country-wide - make much use of modern works.

"Some of them could even be nationally important as resting-places for migratory birds arriving in Britain in the spring, allowing them to restock after their lengthy flights," he comments. At Aylesbury, a modern plant covering 10 hectares of land but retaining wet grassland irrigation areas, Glue, Bodenham and Bowman have recorded 61 species that have bred, or attempted to breed - an impressive number by any standard. "They include," says Glue, "water rails, snipe, yellow wagtails, whinchats and grasshopper warblers, all scarce breeding birds in Buckinghamshire."

Ironically, though, sewage treatment is going back to basics, for the final effluent clean-up stage anyway. Irrigation plots - where the partly treated liquid is soaked through wetland vegetation to filter it - are coming back into favour. They are often more effective. Many of the birds once familiar at sewage works could return, too.



Sewage dweller: snipe favour wet grassland irrigation areas
Photograph: Mike Read/Planet Earth

Across the Arctic by dog

When Wendy Smith contracted cancer she resigned herself to endless journeys to hospital. Now, writes Duff Hart-Davis, she has just returned from the first ever dog-trek clean across the North American continent

One of the less savoury moments of the journey came when the beavers started to go off. In north Quebec, wanting more nutritious food for her huskies, Wendy Smith took 40 frozen carcasses on board one of the expedition's trucks, and she was disconcerted to find that the animals were delivered skinned but with heads, tails and guts still in place. "The dogs loved them," she recalls. Too late, she realised it was a mistake to feed them the beavers whole: the huskies got diarrhoea, and the rest of the carcasses, rapidly becoming high, had to be thrown away.

Looking at Wendy, you would never guess that 10 years

ago she almost died of cancer. At 36 her eyes are bright, her complexion is glowing, her movements are quick. The fact that she looks so fit is hardly surprising, for she has just pulled off a colossal feat of endurance - the first-ever dog-trek clean across the North American continent. During the winter she mushed (drove her husky teams) more than 4,000 miles, to show other sufferers that cancer can be beaten, and to raise funds for research.

A former Army officer, she was struck by Hodgkin's disease in 1988, and became so ill that she and her family all thought she was going to die. But she fought back with aston-

ishing courage, made a sudden recovery, and returned to energetic pursuits, leading treks in many wild parts of the world.

It was a fascination with wilderness, snow and huskies that led to her marathon mush across the Canadian Arctic. Having rounded up four supporters, she flew to Alaska last October to collect her dogs and equipment. Her team manager was Mark Howard, a policeman who for a year had given over his house in Oxford for use as an office. The member with most cold weather experience was Crispin Day, the polar explorer. Will Locke, a mountaineering pal of Mark's, joined because he had six months free, and Maggie Annatt, an old friend of Wendy's, went along - as she thought - for the first couple of weeks, but ended up covering the entire distance.

In Anchorage the team spent two weeks assembling dogs, food, vehicles and other essentials. Then, in eight days, they hurried across to Maine, on the north-east coast of America - an epic, 6,000-mile journey in itself. With three drivers sharing two hefty pick-up trucks, they were on the road for 16 hours a day. The 20 huskies travelled in a specially-built wooden box with separate compartments, 10 a side, each with its own door. Every four hours they had to be taken out and pegged, to stretch and relieve themselves (if ever let loose, they would run off or start fighting).

After two weeks' shaking down, the expedition set off on 15 November. Wendy's hope was that to be able to travel by sled, but as a back-up, in case she ran out of snow, she had an all-terrain vehicle (ATV), a Polaris quad bike, which the



In harness: Wendy Smith mushes across North America

Photograph: Mark Howard

dog teams could pull instead. When bin of snow fell the night before she left, it seemed a wonderful omen. Alas, it proved false: the whole way she was plagued by unseasonably mild weather, which she blamed on El Niño, and had to

The huskies had to wear cloth boots, and wore out 7,000 of them

resort to the ATV for more than a third of the journey.

So began a phenomenal test of stamina. Every morning the team was up in the dark at 4am, getting the huskies out and feeding them - itself a two-hour task. Wendy would start mushing at 7am, and carry on for 12 or 14 hours, stopping only for

her crew to change teams. She herself drove every yard of the way. With the sled she could warm up by occasionally jumping off and running or skating, but on the ATV she got so frozen that at the end of a stint her legs would not work, and she more or less toppled off.

Two of the team would generally be ranging ahead on snow machines, reconnoitring the trail, and if necessary breaking it. The trouble was that most of the trails that would have been open in a normal winter simply did not exist.

The snow was so thin, and the going so rough, that the sled went through three pairs of normal runners a day (at \$40 a pair), so the team nailed on thick strips of roofing polyethylene instead. The huskies had to wear cloth boots, often three sets at a time, and wore out 7,000 of them.

The worst moment came on the afternoon of 23 Decem-

ber. After a splendid morning, on which they had covered 60 miles, mushing through the dawn, the team was on its way to an overnight rendezvous when their truck skidded on the ice of a logging trail, plunged down a 10-ft bank and landed on its side in waist-deep snow, smashing the engine block on

a boulder and trapping half the huskies in their cubicles on the lower side of the box.

Wendy, fearing that the dogs would suffocate, thought, "That's it. The expedition's over." In fact, a tow-truck arrived to pull them out within half an hour; the huskies were none the worse, and after a 24-hour battle to reorganise their surviving vehicles, the team was back in action.

Her trek ended in partial disappointment. She had hoped to carry on far into the north west of Alaska and mush 1,600 miles along the Quest and Iditarod trails, which use frozen lakes and stretches of the Yukon River; but when she reached Whitehorse she found that the middle of the stream had already thawed, and Canadian Rangers strongly advised her not to try it. She therefore headed for Skagway, on the Pacific, and reached the sea - a twinkle of blue between spiky white mountains - on 15 March, four months to the day after setting out, with 4,410 miles behind her.

In making that tremendous

effort, she saw many parallels with cancer treatment. "If you have a lot of obstacles to overcome, you have to keep your goal in mind," she says. "You have to stay determined, and keep going, regardless of how tough things get. That's why we found it so hard to stop when we did; we'd set out to show that we wouldn't be daunted by any difficulty, even if it seemed insurmountable."

Wendy now aims to write a book, and, come next winter, to be back in Alaska, to complete the eight-week trip down the Yukon to Nome, on the Bering Sea. "This could turn out to be just the final stage of my first trip," she says. "or it could be the second stage of a round-the-world mush". Next stop Siberia, then? Nobody who knows Wendy would put it past her.

Donations can be sent to the Imperial Cancer Research Fund at 213 Chancery House, Tolworth Close, Tolworth, Surrey KT6 7EW. Details of the expedition are available on the Dog-Trek website: www.dogtrek97-98.ea.internet

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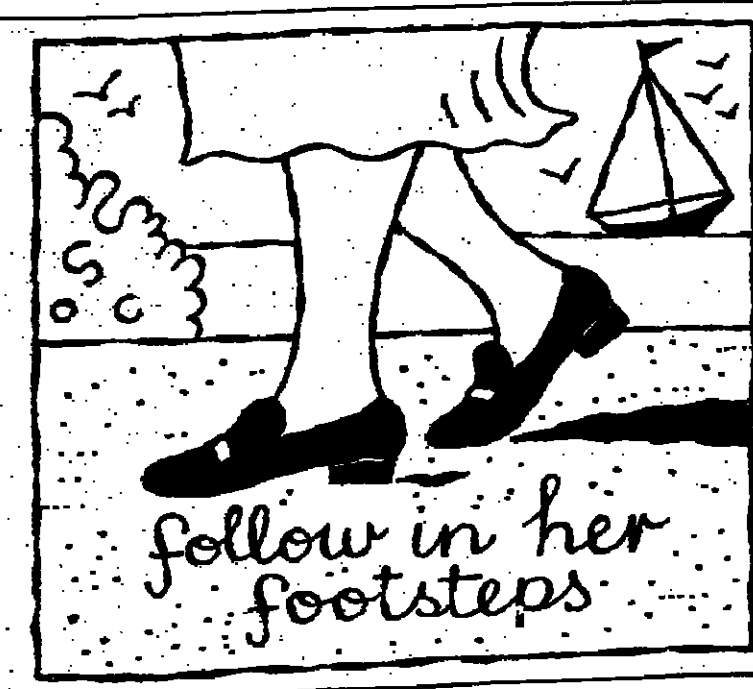
What, when, where?

Relive tales of suspense and smuggling in the Cornish town of Fowey this Sunday. Three organised walks enable you to follow in the footsteps of the romantic novelist: Daphne du Maurier (1907-1986) who set many of her stories around this part of the Cornish coast. The Daphne du Maurier festival this weekend includes exhibitions, plays and a service at Tregaminion Chapel near Menabilly in 1943 and used it

as the model for Manderley, the house in *Rebecca* - which later became a Hitchcock film.

Holy Communion at Tregaminion Chapel is on Sunday at 9.30am; the My Cousin Rachel walk, on Sunday at 10.30am, starts at Redymoney Beach, Fowey, £3.50; the Loving Spirit walk, on Sunday at 1.30pm, starts at Poiran Quay, £3.50 (call 01726 74324 for details).

Sally Kindberg



follow in her footsteps

The germinator

A stand at Chelsea commemorates the cotton broker who sowed the seeds of modern horticulture in Britain, writes Ursula Buchan

We live in a golden age for mass gardening, yet gardeners, being no less human than anyone else, are prey to fits of nostalgia for times gone by - particularly when it comes to the disappearance of the rich plantsman patron.

In the first quarter of this century, there were a number of wealthy amateur gardeners with estates or large gardens, who liked to spend their money sponsoring plant-hunting expeditions. They were individualistic and acquisitive, and often highly competitive. Sometimes they also owned a nursery, sometimes not, but always they divided the collected seed amongst their friends, and they usually forged close links with botanic gardens. Prominent among them were John Charles Williams at Caerbays, Lionel de Rothschild at Exbury, Sir Frederick Stern from Highdown and HD McLaren from Bodnant. The man who gave the lead was Arthur Kilpin Bulley (1861-1942).

Bulley, a successful Liverpool cotton broker, made several gardens in the Wirral, the most magnificent of which was his last - at Ness, near Neston, where he also founded a famous nursery and seed merchants, Bees. For 20 years, starting in 1904, Bulley paid wholly or in part for explorations to the temperate regions of the Far East, particularly China, by George Forrest, Frank Kingdon Ward, Roland Cooper and Reginald Farrer. These intrepid individuals endured hardships, loneliness and fear to collect hardy plants, especially alpine species and rhododendrons. All of them are commemorated in plants they introduced. Many of these were first distributed commercially by Bees, and a number are well established in cultivation.

The recently published *A Pioneering Plantsman, AK Bulley and the Great Plant Hunters*, by Brenda McLean (HMSO, £29), shows Bulley to have been a fascinating and complicated man. Although well connected in the purple of commerce, he was a lifelong Socialist and agnostic (he maintained this was a reaction to attending Marlborough College, which was churchy and conservative).

He was a humane man, who ran his nursery as a co-operative and allowed visitors into his garden free of charge all the year round. He died in 1942, after 44 years at Ness, and in 1948 his daughter, Lois, gave the garden of 60 acres (24 hectares) to the University of Liverpool. It is now an environmental and horticultural research station for the university, and a much admired public garden.

This year is the centenary of Bulley's move to Ness, a milestone to be celebrated next week at Chelsea Flower Show, with an exhibit staged jointly by Ness Botanic Gardens and the Alpine Garden Society. It is fitting that the designer is Dr Christopher Grey-Wilson, himself a plant hunter as well as a botanist, gardener and writer.

The exhibit is principally composed of a number of large and very fine, well-weathered stone troughs, planted with alpine amenable enough for amateurs to grow successfully. Twelve of the troughs are of Triassic sandstone, and come from Ness. They were gathered from nearby farms in the Sixties and Seventies, as development encroached, and are usually to be seen at the gardens, filled with rock plants. The largest weighs about half a tonne. The others were provided by the Alpine Garden Society (AGS), which owns an enviable number, including a stone coffin.

The exhibit also includes outcrops of tufa, that strange, porous, volcanic, alpine-friendly rock, together with a raised bed and a pond, the stone for which has been given by the aptly-named Hard Rock Quarry, near Skelmersdale. This stone will be reused at Ness after the show is over.

It is an ambitious display, even for the AGS, which last year won the Holford Medal, the prize for the best amateur exhibit at any Royal Horticultural Society show during the



Champion of the plant hunters: AK Bulley

year. The society depends entirely on its members, both for setting up the Chelsea exhibit and for growing the plants.

This one looks set to make quite an impression in the marquee, with bright jewels of mountain flowers sparkling in the troughs, the tufa, and the raised bed. The gods have not been kind, it is true: the strange weather conditions this spring will mean no charming, golden-yellow *Primula bulleyana* or red-dish-pink *Primula besiana* to commemorate AK Bulley in flower. Nevertheless, visitors to the stand will be left in no

doubt of the achievements of the Liverpool entrepreneur who did so much to enrich British gardening.

Last Sunday, during a break from manhandling troughs and tufa rock in the marquee, Chris Grey-Wilson told me of his forthcoming plant-hunting expedition to the Caucasus. The money to fund such a trip has come mostly in grants from public bodies and charitable trusts. There will be no help from any garden-minded mobile phone mogul or computer millionaire, it seems. Ah, change and decay...

WEEKEND WORK

Continue to sow small quantities of radish and lettuce at two-weekly intervals to encourage a continuous supply throughout the season. I have sown 'Frisby' lettuce (Dobbies, 92p) for its frilly, cut-and-come-again leaves, and a different Batavian type called 'Pierre Benite' (Unwins, 99p).

Sow runner beans, either inside where you can hurry them on, or directly outside. Either way, you should have a couple of loads of compost seething quietly in the trench they are to go into.

In the south, make sure that plants such as tomatoes and marrows are hardened off, before planting out. This also applies to tomato plants that you have bought in. They have often been whipped from polytunnel to sales point with no hardening off in between. In the north, wait until June before risking tomatoes outside.

Plant dahlias, covering the tubers with about 3in of soil. The bronze-leaved varieties are showy, but all dahlias are difficult to work into the average flower border. They leave large holes until midsummer and then overcompensate by crowding out their neighbours. Use them to follow on from oriental poppies, which won't be bullied.

Prune osmanthus to a well-balanced shape after it has flowered. They make attractive domes if you cut back over-ambitious leaders at this time of year.

Wise gardeners will start staking herbaceous perennials soon, before they really need it.

Keep sedums compact by cutting back the first shoots and forcing them to resprout, or by winding a web of soft string round them, attached to a short stockade of sticks set round each clump.

Continue to deadhead daffodils, leaving stems and leaves intact. This will force them to concentrate on building up next year's bulbs.

Attack bindweed, which is already curling in its hideous way through clematis and roses. Pull groundsel before it seeds. Heave out creeping buttercup, a pretty weed but a bully.

CUTTINGS

Cary Goode, who has created a fine six-acre garden at Thornhill Park, Stalbridge, Dorset, is running a course on the best way to plant a gravel garden. Properly done, this can be a labour-saving and versatile way of gardening, as anyone who has seen Beth Chatto's gravel garden in Essex will know. A gravel garden provides a good bridge between formal and wild areas in a garden and introduces a habitat that is especially suited to drought-resistant plants. The course is planned for 9 June (10am-3.30pm) and the cost is £40. For further information phone 01963 362746.

Unwins' best-selling runner bean is the variety 'Galaxy' (Unwins £2.79), which, say the seedsmen, has been bred to produce a reliable crop even in the hottest summer. Usually, hot, dry weather inhibits the beans, and their flowers will not set into pods. Runner beans can be sown outside any time between now and the beginning of July. A packet contains enough beans for a 20-ft row. Call 01945 588 522 for stockists.

Sonia Wright, whose nursery I mentioned recently (*Independent*, 28 March) has written to point out that I gave her home address rather than the nursery address. I'm sorry. Devotees in search of Barnhaven primulas, or other plants in her "wide and somewhat eccentric collection" (her description) should make their way to The Old Vineyard, Grove Farm, Stitchcombe, Nr Mildenhall, Marlborough, Wiltshire (01672 514003). The nursery is open daily (except Wed and Sun) from 10am to 6pm.

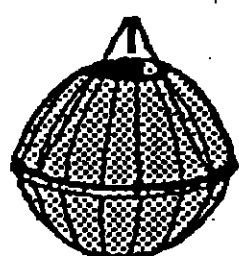
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GARDEN SHOWS

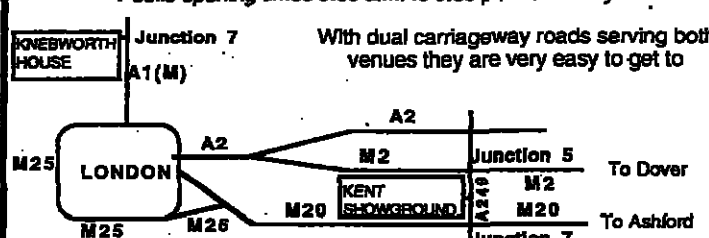
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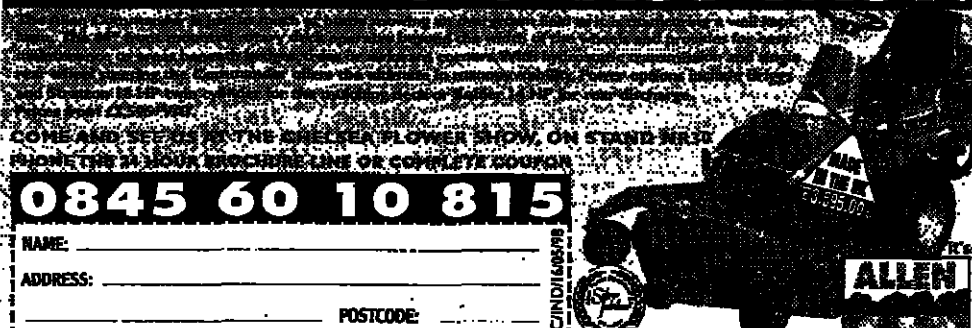
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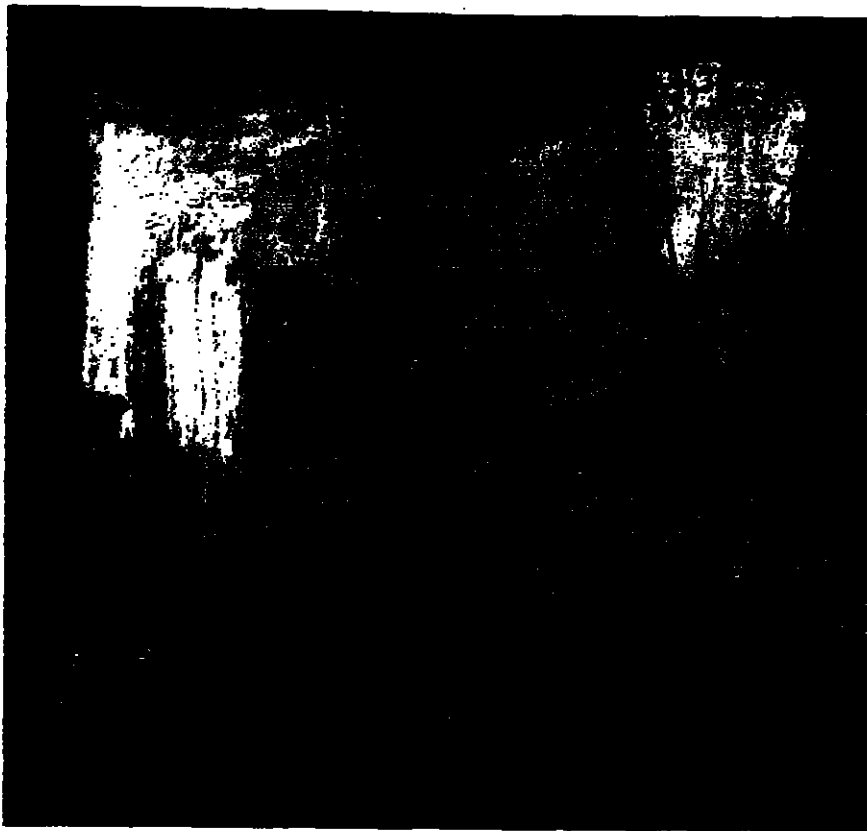
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Abstract outlet: on show at Oxfordshire's Merriscourt gallery (below) - Arthur Neal's 'Garden 5' (oil on canvas, £2,800), far left; Julian Bailey's 'Bathers' (oil on board, £2,500), left; and 'Lemion 1' (oil on canvas, £3,000) by Arthur Neal, below left

You say pig shed, we say art gallery



Abstract paintings on a working farm? Catherine Stebbings visits a gallery with a difference

A pig shed on a working farm in the Cotswolds is an unlikely yet striking setting for a serious contemporary art gallery. Recent exhibitions and a lively summer show at Merriscourt Gallery are attracting art collectors from all over the country.

The gallery is run by Nick Clements, a specialist picture-framer, and Hermione Owen, a painter. "We're unconventional types who wanted to show paintings that we admired but felt were not being shown - and we wanted to do so in a rather different way," explains Nick.

The display of abstract and representational art looks entirely worthy of a Cork Street gallery in London. Huge, energetic oils by Julian Bailey and intensely coloured Indian scenes by Susan-Jayne Hocking are among the paintings currently on show.

The bolder the better, as far as Nick is concerned. "I like it when they slap the paint on, being a bit wild about it, and really enjoy themselves," he says. The gallery is a relaxed, unpretentious place where visitors can feel at home. Walkers pop in leaving rows of muddy boots on the doorstep; dogs and children play in the courtyard around Paul Grellier's cast-iron Toll Tower.

Yet, for all the laid-back atmosphere, this is a serious outlet for art. The intention is to appeal not so much to the connoisseur as to those who are relatively new to the art market. And Hermione points out: "that gives us some licence with what we can show."

The gallery is well worth a visit from anyone thinking of embarking on an art collection, unsure of where to start and

what to buy. Neither the place nor the prices are inhibiting. The artists shown here are exciting, intriguing and accomplished, yet charges range from £250 to £4,000. Here looking at pictures is fun and buying paintings is rewarding. Not surprisingly, people tend to come back for more.

Paintings and shows change frequently. A number of painters, including Hermione herself, are often exhibited here, but the gallery is also always introducing fresh talent. Future plans include a retrospective of André Bicat (1909-1996) and one-man shows by Arthur Neal, Julian Bailey and Vince Tutton.

Merriscourt Gallery is at Merriscourt Farmhouse, Churchill, near Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire OX7 6QX (01608 659734)



GAMES

WILLIAM HARTSTON

A POLITICO-MUSICOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF EVERYTHING

Britain's place in Europe is a matter of serious concern to us all, with the question of political and monetary integration perhaps the single most important issue of the present day. Yet last weekend showed just how serious it really is, and brought home the real issue facing us in dramatic fashion. The conclusion any thinking person can no longer avoid is clear: *If we do not join the Single European Currency, we may never again win the Eurovision Song Contest.*

Let us get one thing clear from the start: we had the best song. Every single nation, whether signed up for the euro or not, placed the British entry among its top 10. No other country can claim such a success.

But just look at the story told in Table 1, below: of the 25 entries to the contest, eight were among those that have signed up for membership of the single currency. Those eight awarded the

UK an average of 5.0 points. The other 16 nations (excluding the UK, which could not vote for itself) awarded an average of 7.9 points. A huge discrepancy.

We see a similar pattern if we look at the scores awarded to Germany and Portugal, broken down according to euro membership or non-membership. Scores from the euro-nations work out at an average of 5.4 for Germany and 2.6 for Portugal, yet the non-euro countries awarded them averages of 2.3 and 1.2 respectively.

Table 2 (right), however, shows that the situation is not as simple as it might seem. The first column of figures gives the total number of points given to each euro-nation by their seven fellow single-currency partners; the second column gives the points they received from the 16 non-members. If we add up the totals, we see 159 points given by euro to euro and 336 points given by non-euro to euro, giving averages of 22.7 against 21.0 - an insignificant difference. Yet just look at the scores for Finland and Ireland, both scoring almost all their points from non-euro nations, despite having signed up for the euro themselves.

Table 2: Votes cast for euro-nations

	euro	non-euro
France	0	3
Spain	7	14
Germany	38	36
Portugal	18	19
Netherlands	52	99
Belgium	44	79
Finland	0	22
Ireland	3	61

There are only two possible conclusions: either the euro countries were trying to disguise their evident bias by an agreement not to vote for Finland or Ireland, or they simply did not know that Finland and Ireland had joined.

But the scores given to Israel reveal the truth: the winning singer received 87 of her points from the eight euro countries and exactly the same number from the 16 non-euro. The conclusion is inescapable: the single currency nations all voted for Israel just to stop the UK winning.

The sooner we join the better.

PANDORA MELLY

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Gerard Benson, 67, poet, editor, and one of the three people responsible for *Poems on the Underground*.

I've always been a player of games. I had a grandfather I used to play dominoes with, which I loved doing because he was an old buffer, really. He kept up a kind of commentary of little rhymes. When you put down a tile, he'd say: "Lay a double, lay for trouble" or something. Perhaps not that; I've forgotten it all now.

My other grandfather was a great player of solo whist. He was an ancient Irishman who could remember entire games. It actually got very boring, he could list all the cards that each player had held and the order in which they should have been played. He might have been a fine mathematician, but he was a bus-driver of both horse-drawn and motor-buses.

I've always been keen on chess. A few years ago, the GLC hosted two chess tournaments in which the greatest players in the world were playing. I went along to write a nice human-interest piece about it for *The Literary Review*. I

was talking to a friend at the reception, when a lady bustled up to me and said: "Ah, here you are. Could you come over and be photographed?" She'd mistaken me for Boris Spassky, the ex-world champion of chess. I actually didn't look anything like him, but I was about the same age, and we're both very handsome, so it was an understandable mistake.

For a few moments, I had this wonderful fantasy that I was going to be made to play chess against Karpov, or at least Nigel Short, but it didn't happen. I think Karpov would have known I wasn't Boris Spassky, even if the lady from the GLC hadn't.

So that was one of my great sporting occasions: when I nearly had to play Karpov.

Gerard Benson edits *Nemo's Almanac*, the world's oldest literary quiz (available from the publisher at 46 Ashwell Road, Manningham, Bradford BD8 9DU for £2 including p+p). His Bradford and Beyond is a journal in sonnets including two poems about chess (Flambard Press, £5.95 from specialist bookshops).

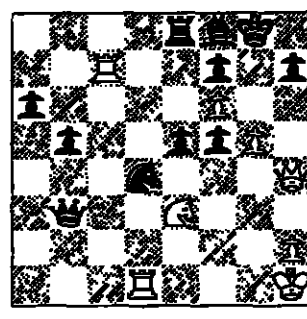
CHESS: WILLIAM HARTSTON

The bare moves of a game never tell you one of the most important things: what the loser was thinking just before the roof fell in on him. Just look at the diagram position. White to play, from the game Illescas-Yermolinsky, played this week in Madrid. Black has just played 34...Qxb3 and his thoughts might well have been any of the following:

a) I've got the guy on the ropes. I have bishop and three pawns for a rook. I have four passed pawns, everything's defended and I'm even attacking his knight on e3.
b) Everything looks OK as far as I can see; I hope he doesn't have any trick I've missed.
c) Please God don't let him find 35.g6.

I suspect that Black's true thoughts were more b) than the others. When he played 21...Bd7 and 22...g6, Black probably missed the idea of 25.b3 followed by Bxe5 and Rxd7 - it's not the sort of thing you allow your opponent to do if it is avoidable. After that, Black's play was led mainly by tactical necessity and improvisation until the diagram position was reached. But if Black had seen 35.g6, he would probably not have captured on b3.

After 35.g6! Black cannot take with the f-pawn because of mate on h7. After 35...bxc6 36.Rg1! Black has no time to take on c3 because of the threat of 37.Rxg6+! That is not an easy threat to meet,



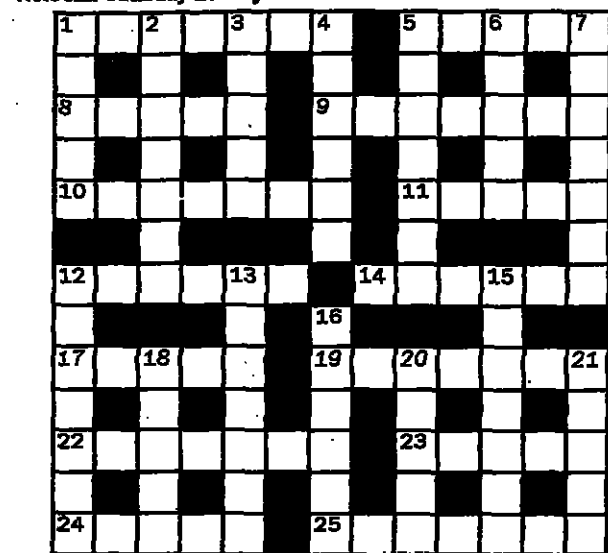
and 36...Bg7 had an air of desperation about it.

Rather than enter the obscurity of a position with a rook for five pawns after 37.fg7 Kxg7, Illescas played 37.Rxg6! anyway, and once he had avoided the trap of 38.Rg1? Qxg1+ 39.Kxg1 Nf3+, the game was decided.

White: Miguel Illescas
Black: Alex Yermolinsky
1 e4 c5 23 Qb4 Bg7
2 Nc3 e6 24 f6 Bf8
3 Nd5 d6 25 b3 Nxa3
4 d4 cxd4 26 Bxe5 dxe5
5 Nxd4 Nf6 27 Nf5 exd5
6 Ne2 Be7 28 Rxd7 Qe6
7 0-0 Nc6 29 Rfd1 Nxc2
8 Be3 Bd7 30 exf5 gxf5
9 Nb3 a6 31 Rc7 Rad8
10 f4 b5 32 Bf5 Rxd5
11 a3 0-0 33 Nxd5 Nd4
12 Bf3 Qc7 34 Ne3 Qxb3
13 g4 Bc8 35 g6 hxg6
14 g5 Nd7 36 Rg1 Bg7
15 Bg2 Nb6 37 Rxg6 Qb1+
16 f5 Nc4 38 Kg2 Ne6
17 Bc1 Re8 39 Rg7+ Nrg7
18 Qh5 Nxe5 40 f8g7 Kxg7
19 Kh1 Qb6 41 Qg5+ Kf8
20 Bf4 Bf8 42 Qb6+ Kg8
21 Rad1 Bd7 43 Qg5+ Kf8
22 Nd4 g6 44 Qh5 resigns

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- Banger (7)
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- Uncomfortable (6)
- Negligent (6)
- Overwrought (3,2)
- Fundamental (7)
- In proportion (3,4)
- Doctrine (5)
- Hooligan (5)
- Area of bishop's jurisdiction (7)

DOWN

- Knitted footwear (5)
- Foster (7)
- Additional (5)
- Young bird (6)
- Offensive (7)
- Allure (5)
- Men's undergarments (1-6)
- Sad (7)
- High singing voice (7)
- Anger (7)
- Short journey (6)
- Incisor or molar, e.g. (5)
- The same (5)
- Machine tool (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Bawdy, 4 Insole (Body and soul), 9 Narrate, 10 Vodka, 11 Step, 12 Cabbage, 13 Ash, 14 Gust, 16 Ugly, 18 See, 20 Overlap, 21 Ache, 24 Adult, 25 Ukulele, 26 Calico, 27 Ka-poot. DOWN: 1 Banish, 2 Worse, 3 Year, 5 Navy blue, 6 Odd-ball, 7 Enamel, 8 Teach, 13 Athletic, 15 Unequal, 17 Mosaic, 18 Spout, 19 Recent, 22 Creep, 23 Sulk.

BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

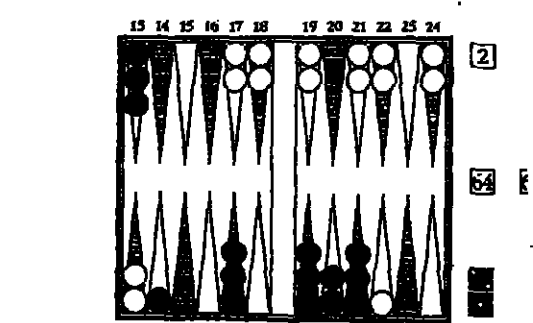
East-West game; dealer South			
North		East	
♠ Q 5		♠ A 7 4 3 2	
♥ Q 8 6 4		♥ 5 2	
♦ A K 7 6 3		♦ Q 10 8 2	
♣ 10 5		♣ 8 4	
West		South	
♠ J 10 9 6		♠ K 8	
♥ A J 9		♥ K 10 7 3	
♦ J 4		♦ 9 5	
♣ J 9 7 3		♣ A K Q 6 2	

It was quite a subtle defensive point and a lack of clear thinking that led West in the wrong direction. I am quite sure that it was because the winning play looked wrong that he went astray.

South opened 1♠, North responded 1♦, and South rebid 1♥. North raised to 3♥ and South went to 4♥. West led ♠J, dummy played low and, after some thought, East took his ace and returned the suit with the fall of the king clarifying the spade position for both defenders. It all looked routine, and declarer started with a heart to the queen, which held, and a second heart. He tried ♥10 from hand but West produced the jack and drew a third round of trumps with his ace. The defence had now reached a critical point and, hoping that his partner held a missing club honour, West switched to ♠3. No joy; the ten from dummy held the trick and declarer was able to claim.

It all passed off unnoticed as a routine result at the table, for a diamond switch would not have helped either - after one club ruff, the suit is established for declarer, but what about a third round of spades? Assuming declarer has a 2-4-2-5 hand pattern - very likely from his failure to bid no-trumps - the winning defence (which does not require partner to hold anything in clubs) is to concede a ruff and discard with a third round of spades! If declarer ruffs in hand, he can establish but not reach his long club suit; if he ruffs on the table and discards a club from hand, West wins the fourth round of clubs for the setting trick.

BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY



Here's a position that caused an argument in the weekly chouette. The team, playing Black, consisted of three players. The captain had already doubled but the other two team members hadn't (all three cubes are shown in the diagram). Black now rolled 21. Should they play (a) 13/11, 6/5 or (b) 13/11, 4/3*?

Always remember that backgammon is a race. Here, before the roll, the racing counts are Black 114, White 108. So even after the roll Black will be slightly behind. The captain argued hard that move (a) was correct. His view was that White was unlikely to escape and so he could still attack next roll when he might roll a better number. The team wanted to hit with move (b) as in many variations - for example when White throws one of the nine numbers that keep him on the bar - they would be able to double White out. Even if White does hit, Black is far from dead because if he re-enters at once it could be anybody's game.

In a chouette the captain has the final choice of move and the team could not persuade him to agree to their choice. White's next roll was 65 which he played 22/11 and he went on to win the game easily. But who was right?

The answer is the bit by a big margin. For the team members, it is true that after move (a) they may still have a good double next roll or the roll after. For the captain, however, the choice should have been crystal clear. He had already doubled and, as I have often said, once you have doubled you must play aggressively as the cube can no longer help you. By hitting, the captain would have won not only more games but also many more gammons as quite often he will close out White's lone back man. It may seem odd to give your opponent a voluntary shot after escaping your own back men but in this case the gains far outweigh the risks.

Wax lyrical

The skill of creating designs on fabric using hot wax is tricky but fun to learn. Sally Staples talked to converts to the art of batik

The intricate art of producing designs on fabrics using liquid wax and dye is not easy to master. Yet it offers a new challenge to those who have already mastered painting on silk and other fabrics. The trick with batik is to learn how to handle the wax, a tricky substance that can blob and blot in awkward places, thereby turning your carefully planned design into something altogether different. Yet that is the joy of batik, according to a small class I joined, where all four pupils discovered that mistakes made in both landscape and abstract pictures could be turned to good effect.

Shena Maskell, from Worthing, had first drawn a picture of oystercatchers perched on a rock with a sunset over the sea as a background. The foreground was to be rocks, sand and pebbles, but a slight miscalculation with a dribble of wax produced the inspiration to cover some rocks with strands of seaweed.

"Every picture evolves - and using both dye and wax is great fun," she said. "You have to try

working on a picture of the Australian outback, and had created the effect of wind-blown grasses in the foreground of her picture by stroking delicate, thin lines of wax across the rocks and boulders, which were to be depicted as blobs of colour.

"You learn a great deal about building up layers of colour in batik," she said. "I have done silk painting, but there is a lot more technique involved with batik. I find it therapeutic. Part of the reason is that your entire reasoning powers are concentrated on just one thing. You have the opportunity to look really closely at a picture, at the textures and colours, and then try to translate that on to the fabric."

Chris Farrow, from Cowplain in Hampshire, a teacher in textile technology, had come on the weekend course so that she could subsequently offer her own pupils the chance to learn a new skill. As a beginner, Chris was taught the different techniques of applying wax by the tutor, Jenn Williams.

Although the canting is the most conventional way of doing this, curled pipe cleaners, waffle irons and even crumpled kitchen paper can all be dipped into liquid wax and then dabbed on to fabric to produce a variety of effects.

"This course is really excellent because you need to bring so little with you," said Christine. "I just needed pencils, rubber gloves, drawing pins, some kitchen paper and an overall. Jenn makes a small charge of about £3 a head for the materials, which include all the different dyes, wax and wax



to be in control of the wax, but you have greater freedom painting with the dyes and experimenting with the colours."

After drawing her picture Shena had traced it on to a piece of handkerchief lawn - which is the easiest fabric to work on with wax, although silk, muslin and linen can be used. The fabric is attached to a wooden frame and is then ready for the wax, which is applied using a wax drawing tool called a canting. This dribbles hot, sticky molten liquid from a small bowl through a spout on to the fabric. It is used like a quill pen and, like a quill, it can blot unexpectedly. Therefore you need to be able to react quickly.

Using deft movements Shena outlined her picture in wax and then filled in those areas she wanted to remain white - such as the oystercatchers' breasts. The wax coating acts as a barrier to prevent colours running and will also resist any dye being painted over it. The art of batik is to build up layers of wax and colour, going from the palest shades gradually through to the darker ones. The waxing process is repeated with each new colour, making any waxed area colour-fast.

Jenny Lopper, from Hayes in Kent, is a retired teacher with some experience in amateur stage design and painting costumes. She was

tools. I read a book about batik before I came and I am making notes on what I've learnt. I think children will really enjoy doing this because learning how to use the wax will be a new technique."

Joyce Forbes, from Wycombe in Hampshire, enjoys quilting, and was hoping to quilt some of the batik designs she had been working on. Her square of fabric was decorated with flowers and once the wax and colour had been completed the design was dried with a hair dryer. Then the piece of fabric was placed between sheets of kitchen roll which in turn were placed between newspaper. The next stage was to iron out all the wax - a process which should be repeated at least twice.

All four students discovered that a close inspection of the back of the fabric can reveal tiny gaps where the wax lines are not quite complete. If these are not filled in the colours can run and spoil some designs, although smudged outlines may enhance abstract ones.

Jenn Williams's residential weekend course is at Earmley Concourse, Earmley, near Chichester, Sussex (01 243-670392), and costs £149. She is also chairman of the Batik Guild of Great Britain (01243-605286).



Art you can wear: the bolder the better in batik design

Photograph: Tony Stone Images

Hot pods from Hungary

The taste of ... paprika.
Nikki Spencer samples
eastern Europe's red gold

They call it *piros arany*, or red gold, and for centuries it has been an essential ingredient in Hungarian cuisine. About 10,000 tons of paprika are produced annually in the eastern European country, of which 50 per cent is for home consumption.

Hungarians get through a staggering half-kilo of the hot stuff per person per year - but then, unlike most spices, which are used by the pinch, Hungarian

paprika is added by the teaspoonful. Paprika is made from dried sweet peppers. Opinions vary on how and when the *Capsicum annuum* plant first arrived in the country. Some say it came from India via Turkey, others credit Christopher Columbus with its introduction.

Either way, it is mentioned in documents dating from the 16th century and its consumption increased due to Continental blockades during the Napoleonic Wars, which compelled Europeans to find a substitute for pepper.

Most of Hungary's paprika pods are cultivated around the towns of Szeged and Kalocsa on the Great Plain, where abundant sunshine gives

the pods their deep concentration of colour and flavour. If you visit this region, about 120km south of Budapest, in September and you will see the green fields transformed into a carpet of vibrant red.

Commercial harvesting is carried out by machine and the pods are then dried in industrial driers before being milled. However strings of pods are also hung outside most homes, where they are dried in the sun for personal use.

In the town of Kalocsa, which is widely promoted as Hungary's paprika capital, there is a museum dedicated to the history of the spice. Here visitors learn that paprika not only flavours and colours food but also has

significant nutritional qualities. It was during experimentation with the plant that Dr Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, of Szeged University, discovered that red paprika contains more vitamin C per gram than is found in oranges or lemons.

The Hungarian paprika industry hit a rocky patch in 1994 when traces of lead oxide were found in a third of all samples. Unscrupulous dealers, it transpired, had been zapping up poor-quality paprika with red paint.

This has now been resolved, and the problem of adulteration is at an end, although competition from other paprika-producing countries, such as Spain, is getting fiercer.

Paprika pointers

- There are many different types of paprika available in Hungarian shops and markets, including rose and apple, but the really hot one is cherry. Usually, though, paprika is sold by strength - hot, strong, mild or sweet - and generally, the more fiery the colour, the greater the quality.

- The paprika museum is at 6 Szent Istvan Kiraly in Kalocsa. Open from April to October, 10am-5pm.

- For a taste of Hungarian paprika in Britain, visit The Gay Hussar, 2 Greek Street, London W1 (0171-437 0973). Goulash is always on the menu at this restaurant, which was a favourite Labour Party haunt in the Seventies.

Hear Alan Davies bring something rare to situation comedy. Humour.

BBC RADIO 4

5.15pm-6.15pm

YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY

A winter of goals, a summer of foals

More and more footballers are being lured to the sport of kings. Greg Wood finds the reasons why

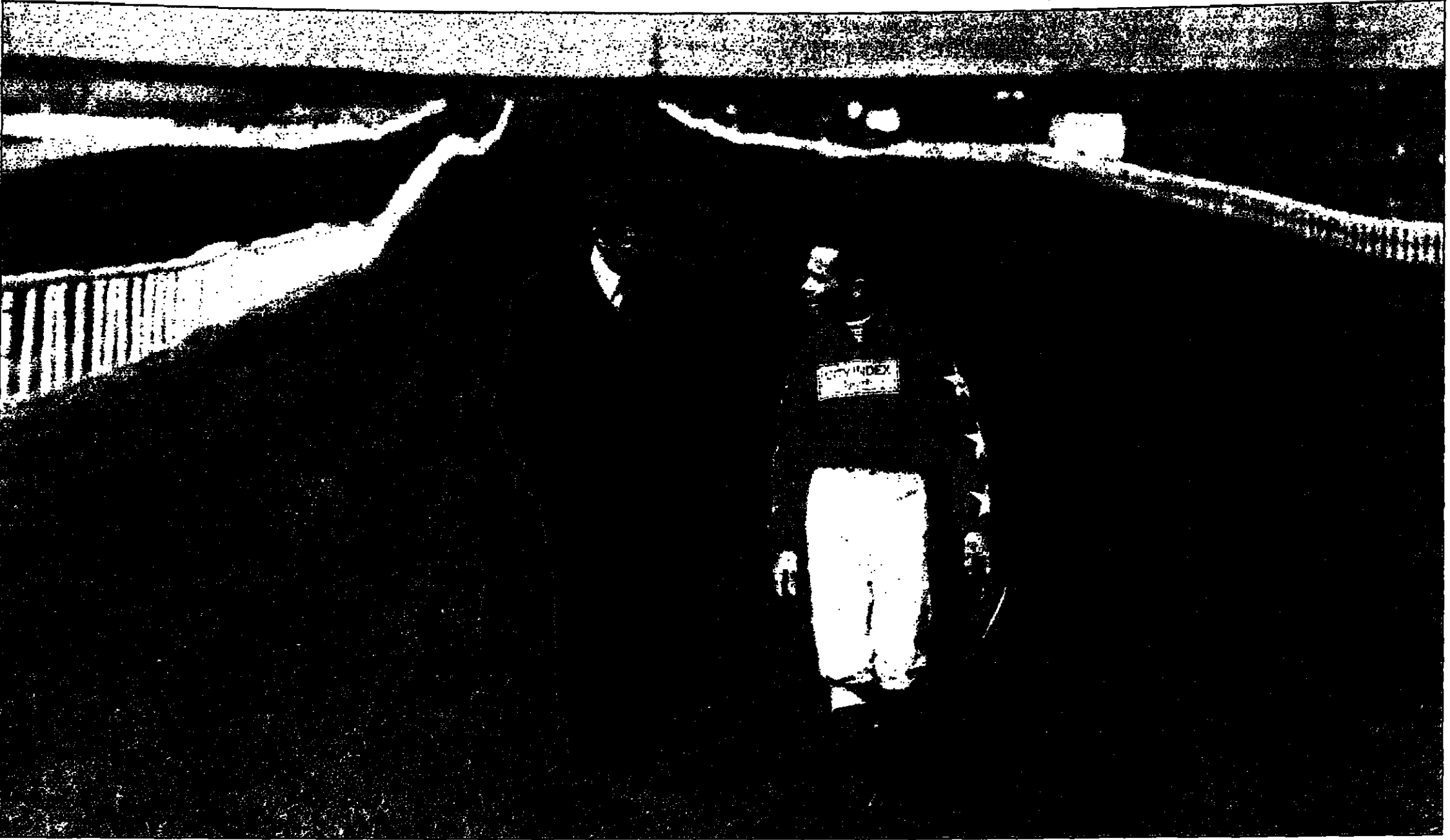
PROFESSIONAL footballers have a lot of spare time on their hands in June and early July, but you will not generally find them at Wimbledon or the Lord's Test match. Go to some of the high-summer racing festivals, however, and it can be difficult to turn around without bumping into the forward line of one club or the entire midfield of another.

The working class game and the sport of kings may come from very different backgrounds, but they have grown up to be close companions. For some, such as Mick Quinn and Mike Channon, racing has become a full-time second career when their playing days are over. Others, including David Alcott, Kevin Keegan and, more recently, Alex Ferguson, have sampled the risks and occasional rewards of ownership, and dozens of other players and managers have a leg or two in a partnership.

Harry Redknapp writes a regular - and very stimulating - column in the *Racing Post*, and recently beat the newspaper's best form expert in a charity tipping competition. And there is scarcely a dressing room anywhere in the country which does not have its resident band of dedicated punters.

It is no coincidence, of course, that a footballer's daily training session tends to finish at around one o'clock, just as the afternoon's racing kicks off. Three hours in a betting shop can be an irresistible, and sometimes disastrous, diversion for a young man with plenty of cash and time to kill.

Yet the relationship between racing and football is about more than easy thrills. For some, there is also a fascination with the way in which prepar-



Team talk: Royston French, sporting Alex Ferguson's silks, discusses riding tactics with the Manchester United manager on the Newmarket straight where Ferguson's two-year-old Queensland Star won four weeks ago. Queensland Star was named after a ship Ferguson's father helped build on the Clyde 40 years ago. Now the colt is being aimed at a Royal Ascot prize. Photograph: Peter Jay

ing thoroughbreds to race can resemble their own daily lives. "Before I was a footballer, I used to have my 10p Yankee on a Saturday," Niall Quinn, the Sunderland striker, says. "But then I was able to cross over and see how the racing world works. I like to watch the professionals going about their jobs day in and day out, like we do."

"I admire the different ap-

proaches of the jockeys and I like to watch the saddling and unsaddling, where you see all the nerves. When you see an up-and-coming trainer who's a nervous wreck, it's a bit like a football player who knows he's got a chance at the big time."

Quinn is an ideal representa-

tion of the man who has made his money in football and is now coming to challenge in the last 50 yards, I'm jelly. I can handle big games, because it's my career, but keep my hands steady during a race, forget it."

His hands were trembling fairly frequently a few seasons ago, when the first horse Quinn owned, a cheaply-bought two-year-old called Cois Na Tine, turned out to be of Group-race standard. He was sold to race in the USA at the end of his first

season, with his owner clearing a £100,000 profit. Quinn, though, "being the big softie I am", bought him back when his racing career ended, and Cois Na Tine now stands at stud in Ireland. "That first horse got us in deep," he says. "I'm not one of those owners who only ring their trainer the day before their horse runs. We've got one entered on Saturday [Mel-

bourneffixys runs in the 3.20 at Thirsk, though her owner is not optimistic] and I'll be there to see her work at eight o'clock tomorrow morning."

Racing tends to take as it finds, meaning that even a famous footballer can often blend into the background in a way impossible elsewhere. Quinn, for obvious reasons, finds this more difficult - "especially

when everyone around me in the racing world is five foot three" - but he remains hopelessly hooked.

"What I enjoy most is the healthy respect you get in racing," he says. "In football, people are trying to out-perform each other all the time, but in racing there's no animosity. Everyone knows how tough it is to make a go of it."

Men stands out by a mile

By Richard Edmondson

THE LOCKINGE Stakes has hardly been a parade of champions in recent years. Recent winners in Swing Low, Emperor Jones and Soviet Line have not been the worst horses in the world, but then they have not galloped through the clouds to join the equine gods later in the season either.

First Island, the winner 12 months ago, looked one of the better victors and he did indeed end up in the clouds, but not in the manner he would have wished. Geoff Wragg's colt broke a cannon bone on the Newmarket gallops the month after his success and had to be destroyed.

This afternoon's Group One contest at Newbury also promises to throw up a winner of some heavenly meaning, while there are two pleasingly parochial horses who join the bunch of most promising sorts.

John Jenkins was a big noise in the jumping sphere a few years back but these days we get barely a peep out of him. Nevertheless he now has the stew-

ardship of a beast called Hornbeam, who might even have taken a hand today had the ground been a little softer.

Two years ago, Beauchamp King looked as if he was going to be a world beater before he started producing form that suggested he would, instead, soon be a beefburger. After beating the 2,000 Guineas favourite, Alhaarth, in the Craven Stakes at Newmarket, he went five races without a sniff. He did manage to win once last year, from another batch of five efforts, even if that was a tiddler at Doncaster.

The grey has since been discharged from John Dunlop's army at Arundel and now resides in the less crowded setting of Gerard Butler's Farningham yard. The fledgling Gerard is not yet a feared force in racing and it is fair to say Beauchamp King would be a shorter price today if he was trained by Henry Cecil. Come to think of it, he probably would be shorter if he was sent out by Henry Cooper. Butler has, at least, managed to wring a victory out of the old horse (his

first win from his third runner) at Haydock earlier this month.

Beauchamp King will, however, need things to go his way if he is to succeed in this lofty company. That means he will have to be crowded in as if on a Tokyo tube train and then be produced on the line (not the underground line).

The leading protagonists here are more likely to be Air Express and Among Men. The former won the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes at Ascot last season, but had already finished behind Among Men in Goodwood's Sussex Stakes.

In addition, Michael Stoute, the trainer of AMONG MEN (nap 3.00), has always considered that his colt would be particularly effective as a four-year-old as he did not run as a juvenile. The horse's chance is hardly compromised either by the identity of his owners, a pairing who have already been represented by Kings Of Kings and Saratoga Springs this year. (Michael) Tabor and (Sue) Magnier are rapidly becoming the Torville and Dean of racehorse ownership.

The previous race contains Godolphin's Happy Valentine, who, by reputation, was going to come over last season and winning everything including the Eurovision Song Contest, a competition the Middle East did finally manage to win even if it was a year on.

Happy Valentine is now stepped up in trip following his reappearance failure, though it might be best to rely on an animal who knows what he is doing in this journey in P'm Supposin (next best 2.30).

At Newmarket, Bold Fact (3.45) is a confident selection as he has reportedly been cured of his tendency to peel off from the main body of a field like a Red Arrow leaving the formation cluster.

The following, 30-strong, Bollinger Champagne Handicap (for Gentleman Amateur Riders) should not be played with even under the influence of the sponsors' product. If you feel like having a bet in this charade take deep breaths and call a friend. There are some incredible treatments out there on the market for this sort of thing.

Rely on Air Express to arrive on time

AIR EXPRESS: Developed into a top class performer last season landing both the Italian and German 2,000 Guineas before leaving that form behind in the prestigious Queen Elizabeth II Stakes at Ascot. Very much the class act here on that last effort and must go close despite lacking a recent run.

ALMUSHTARAK: Has proved a revelation in the last year and maintained his constant improvement by slamming Crystal Hearted five lengths in Sandown's Anniversary Mile last month (looked outstandingly well). Thoroughly genuine and consistent.

AMONG MEN: Looked set to take the highest rank over seven furlongs and a mile last season when taking the Jersey Stakes at Royal Ascot, only to have his limitations slightly exposed subsequently when fourth to Ali-Royal in the Sussex Stakes and second (awarded race) to Cape Cross

Simon Holt (right) of the Channel 4 Racing team gives a runner-by-runner analysis of today's Juddmonte Lockinge Stakes at Newbury



in the Tripleprint Celebration Mile. Still lightly raced and masses of scope for further development. Still lightly raced and masses of scope for further development.

BEAUCHAMP KING: Gave his rookie trainer Gerard Butler a memorable day at Haydock earlier in the month, coming from behind to beat Ramoz (winner since) in Listed company. Group One winner as a two-year-old and clearly he has retained plenty of ability.

CAPE CROSS: Was the winner on merit when disqualified after beating Among Men in Goodwood's Tripleprint Mile last season but hasn't quite set the world alight in two outings for Godolphin so far this year.

CENTRE STALLS: Is one of

the most capable milers in the country on his day (excellent neck second to Allied Forces in the Queen Anne Stakes last June) but still prone to running the odd stinker and has a fragile temperament.

CRYSTAL HEARTED: Made a valiant attempt to make all the running at a searching gallop in the Anniversary Mile at Sandown first time out only to be overhauled and beaten five lengths by Almushtarak. Seems best with front-running tactics and some give in the ground.

HORNBEAM: Third Among Men in the Jersey Stakes at Royal Ascot last June, and returned to score impressively at Doncaster by three lengths from Russian Music. Up in class from that, but highly regarded at home.

KAHAL: Has plenty of speed and quickened impressively to score twice over seven furlongs from just five starts in 1997. Bags of scope for the future but unproven over a mile and could go either way this season: sprints or top mile races.

POTEN: Third in last season's 2,000 Guineas, became a bit disappointing subsequently during a relatively light campaign. Plenty of ability not always matched by resolution.

Conclusion: Cape Cross and Kahal represent Godolphin, who had a very strong five-day entry. However, AIR EXPRESS developed into a solid Group One performer last season, and, providing he is fit and well for his seasonal debut, may just hold the edge, hopefully at a value price. Among Men could yet fulfil early promise and is another to seriously consider while Almushtarak continues to go from strength to strength.

Bangor

HYPERION
11.50 Easter Ross 12.20 Kilmoe River 12.50 Tappo 1.20 Corston Joker 1.50 Finch's Gem 2.20
Winn's Prize 2.50 Triple Thrush 3.25 Valley Of Hope
GOING: Good to Firm (Good in places)
Weather: Cloudy, underlying course; run-in 32yds.
Course is 4m 50c of Wincanton (yearling of 425 and 5000).
Race services from Wincanton station. ADMISSION: Paddock 10c;
Course 25c (under-12s free all enclosures). CAR PARKING FREE.
LEADING TRAINERS: H. Cecil 43-181 (20.9%), D. Lister 20-52 (21.7%),
J. Gosden 22-50 (19.9%), D. Lister 20-52 (21.7%),
W. Ryan 15-10 (10.7%).
LEADING JOCKEYS: R. Hills 28-200 (14%), W. Ryan 15-10 (10.7%),
M. Roberts 22-176 (17.9%), O. Peatfield 4-39 (10.3%).
OFFICIALS: 234-234 (23.9%).
BANKRUPTCY: 234-234 (23.9%).
UNRATED PRIZE: 234-234 (23.9%).

11.50 PENYCAE NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,500 added 2m 1f
1-10: EASTER ROSS (2) (5) N. Henderson 5 11.5 A. P. Fitzgerald
2-10: SEVENHILL (2) (5) M. Phipps 5 11.5 A. P. Fitzgerald
3-10: ARTHUR RULER (2) (5) P. J. Barry 5 11.5 A. P. Fitzgerald
4-10: ARTHUR RULER (2) (5) P. J. Barry 5 11.5 A. P. Fitzgerald
5-10: ARTHUR RULER (2) (5) P. J. Barry 5 11.5 A. P. Fitzgerald
6-10: ARTHUR RULER (2) (5) P. J. Barry 5 11.5 A. P. Fitzgerald
7-10: ARTHUR RULER (2) (5) P. J. Barry 5 11.5 A. P. Fitzgerald
8-10: ARTHUR RULER (2) (5) P. J. Barry 5 11.5 A. P. Fitzgerald
9-10: ARTHUR RULER (2) (5) P. J. Barry 5 11.5 A. P. Fitzgerald
10-10: ARTHUR RULER (2) (5) P. J. Barry 5 11.5 A. P. Fitzgerald

12.50 BODELWYDDAN CASTLE FIREWORK CONCERT NOVICE HPCAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,500 added 2m 4f
1-10: BODELWYDDAN CASTLE FIREWORK CONCERT NOVICE HPCAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,500 added 2m 4f
2-10: BODELWYDDAN CASTLE FIREWORK CONCERT NOVICE HPCAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,500 added 2m 4f
3-10: BODELWYDDAN CASTLE FIREWORK CONCERT NOVICE HPCAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,500 added 2m 4f
4-10: BODELWYDDAN CASTLE FIREWORK CONCERT NOVICE HPCAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,500 added 2m 4f
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8-10: BODELWYDDAN CASTLE FIREWORK CONCERT NOVICE HPCAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,500 added 2m 4f
9-10: BODELWYDDAN CASTLE FIREWORK CONCERT NOVICE HPCAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,500 added 2m 4f
10-10: BODELWYDDAN CASTLE FIREWORK CONCERT NOVICE HPCAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,500 added 2m 4f

1.20 MABURRY HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 4f 110yds
1-10: MABURRY HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 4f 110yds
2-10: MABURRY HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 4f 110yds
3-10: MABURRY HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 4f 110yds
4-10: MABURRY HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 4f 110yds
5-10: MABURRY HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 4f 110yds
6-10: MABURRY HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 4f 110yds
7-10: MABURRY HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 4f 110yds
8-10: MABURRY HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 4f 110yds
9-10: MABURRY HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 4f 110yds
10-10: MABURRY HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 4f 110yds

1.50 NORTH WESTERN AREA P-T-O-P FINAL HUNTER CHASE (CLASS H) £4,000 added 3m 110yds
1-10: NORTH WESTERN AREA P-T-O-P FINAL HUNTER CHASE (CLASS H) £4,000 added 3m 110yds
2-10: NORTH WESTERN AREA P-T-O-P FINAL HUNTER CHASE (CLASS H) £4,000 added 3m 110yds
3-10: NORTH WESTERN AREA P-T-O-P FINAL HUNTER CHASE (CLASS H) £4,000 added 3m 110yds
4-10: NORTH WESTERN AREA P-T-O-P FINAL HUNTER CHASE (CLASS H) £4,000 added 3m 110yds
5-10: NORTH WESTERN AREA P-T-O-P FINAL HUNTER CHASE (CLASS H) £4,000 added 3m 110yds
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9-10: NORTH WESTERN AREA P-T-O-P FINAL HUNTER CHASE (CLASS H) £4,000 added 3m 110yds
10-10: NORTH WESTERN AREA P-T-O-P FINAL HUNTER CHASE (CLASS H) £4,000 added 3m 110yds

2.20 J.J. MCWILLIAM WINES HPCAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 1f
1-10: J.J. MCWILLIAM WINES HPCAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 1f
2-10: J.J. MCWILLIAM WINES HPCAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 1f
3-10: J.J. MCWILLIAM WINES HPCAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 1f
4-10: J.J. MCWILLIAM WINES HPCAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 1f
5-10: J.J. MCWILLIAM WINES HPCAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 1f
6-10: J.J. MCWILLIAM WINES HPCAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 1f
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Forster 'ends an era'

TRIBUTES poured in yesterday for the triple Grand National winning trainer Captain Tim Forster who has announced he will retire at the end of the month after a training career spanning 36 years.

Former jockey Graham Thorne who began his career with Forster at the age of 15 and stayed with the former cavalryman until his retirement in 1981, described Forster as "very tough, but very fair".

Thorne, rode a host of winners for Forster over 15 years including Well To Do, victorious in the 1972 Grand National and the first of a trio of Forster-trained National winners which also included Ben Nevis (1980) and Last Suspect (1985).

"I was with the Captain from the age of 15 to my retirement," said Thorne. "Apart from John Francome and Fred Winter I don't think there have been many longer trainer/jockey relationships."

Thorne was one of many top class jockeys to begin their careers under Forster. Former champion Richard Dunwoody, who joined Forster as an amateur, is another who had a lot to thank him for.

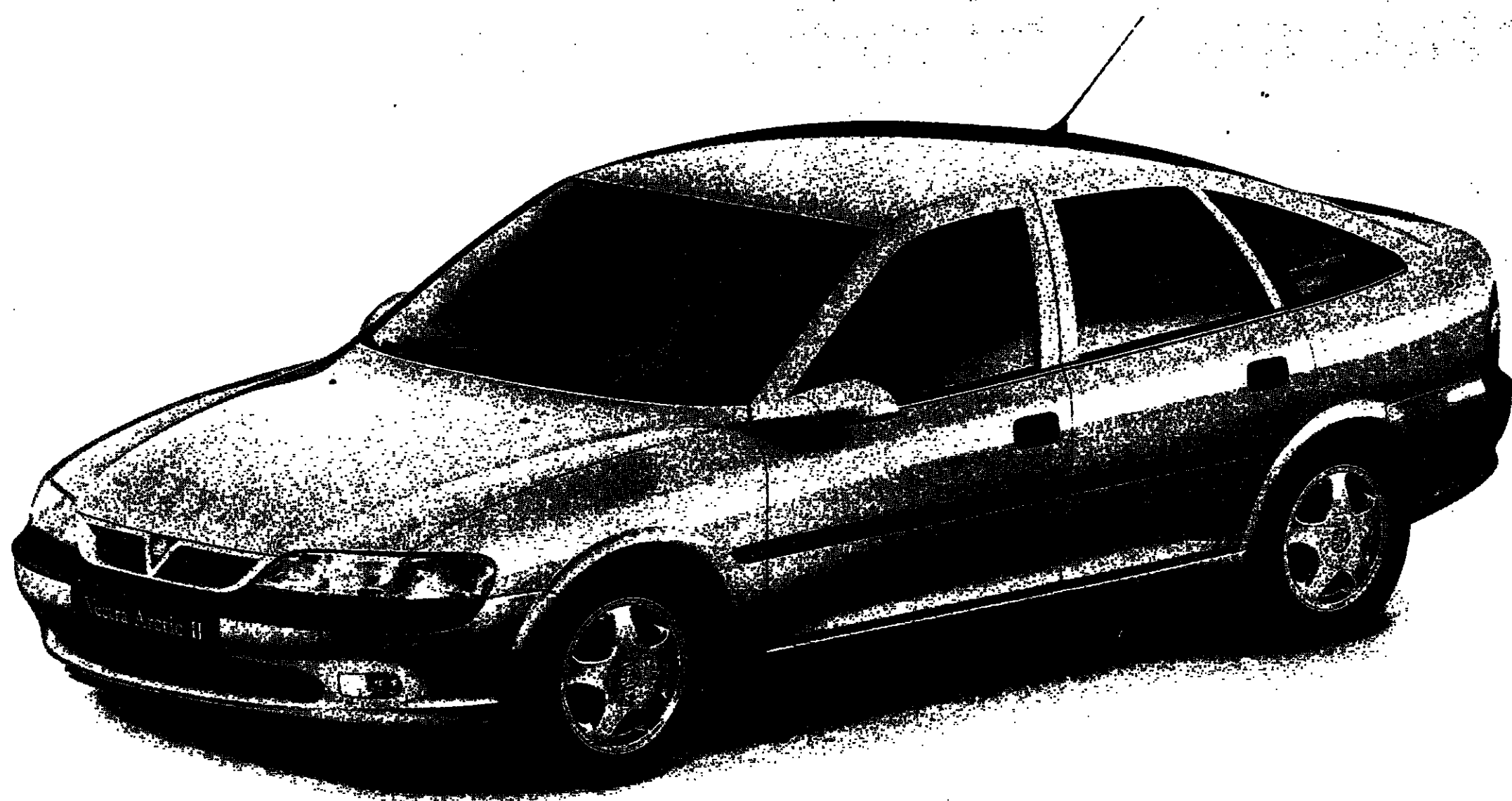
"He was very, very good to me," said Dunwoody. "It was 16 or 17 years ago and I could not have had a better start. It is sad he has retired but hopefully he will still see him on the track, he is a real gentleman."

That view was echoed by Brendan Powell, the Irishman who rode the Forster-trained Dublin Flyer to success in a host of top chases, mostly at Cheltenham.

"He was a great man to ride for and it's the end of an era," said the jockey.

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It is a rare player who can protect himself with a suit of irony



MIKE ROWBOTTOM
DEFENDS THE PLAYERS
THE FANS LOVE TO HATE

THE master of ceremonies did his best to build the atmosphere before Charlton Athletic's play-off match on Wednesday night. "I want those players to hear you in the dressing-room," he exclaimed. "Come on, West Stand! What's happened to you? All Right! Now let's hear you, East Stand!"

Most of the 15,000 souls present responded dutifully, encouraged by the manic intervention of three drummers running around on the pitch like extras from a Ken Russell film. But all the noise was no more than dress rehearsal for an occasion which came truly alive a minute or so after the kick-off as Ipswich Town's piratical full-back, Mauricio Taricco,

received the ball - and vehement boos from every red and white section of the ground.

It was The Valley's way of reminding the Argentinian that his controversial contributions in the first leg four days earlier had not been forgotten. Men, women and children carried out their obligation with the utmost diligence.

They booed Taricco each and every time he became involved in play, regardless of the rising fortunes of their own team. By the final minute, with Charlton 2-0 up on aggregate, the East, West, North and South stands had joined in joyful chorus - "Que sera, sera, whatever will be will be, we're going to Wern-berlee, que

sera, sera." The Red Red Robins were bob-bob-bobbing along until, provocatively, the Ipswich No 3 accepted a pass from his captain, Jason Cundy.

Well, that was it, wasn't it? The songs were stilled, and the boos rang round the ground once more. Never mind Wembley, there was still important business to be done here.

Taricco's sins on Sunday, according to the Charlton fans, had included a late foul which had halted a promising breakaway, involvement in the incident which saw the Charlton full-back, Danny Mills, dismissed and a post-match scuffle. The fact that Taricco came out of the latter requiring stitches in a broken nose was clearly

not regarded as being even a faintly mitigating factor.

It would be unfair to accuse the Charlton crowd of racism. But the fact that Taricco was an Argentinian - and an Argentinian with attitude, three-day stubble and a wild mane of hair - did not help his cause.

For certain players in this country, simply being different is enough to make them more vulnerable to abuse or, on occasions, disciplinary action. Earlier this season, I saw the exotic and impetuous David Ginola booked, amid a welter of unpunished nastiness, for... well, he was waving his arms about a bit, I suppose, and looking quintessentially French. Perhaps it was for persistent Gallicism.

Ginola, of course, has grown used to boos. All over the country, football supporters have set aside their inklings of admiration for his sublime talent and laid into him for being a diver, a drifter, a foreigner.

It was one of Jürgen Klinsmann's great achievements in the Premiership that he was able to acknowledge the reputation which had preceded him to England and to launch himself immediately into a pre-emptive strike. Every goal the German scored for Spurs was marked with an exuberant, self-parodying splashdown. But it is a rare player who can protect himself with a suit of irony.

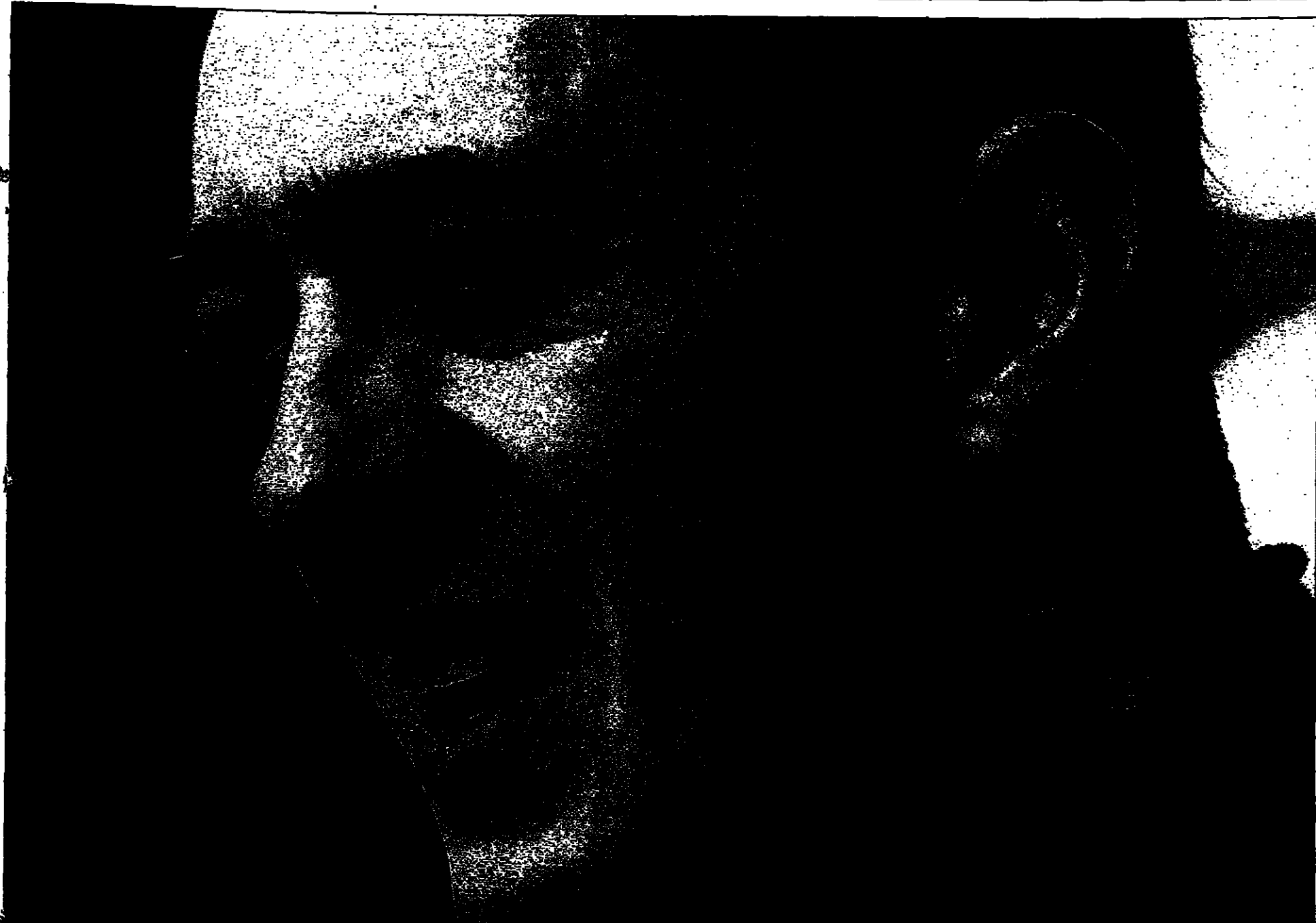
What I find difficult to understand is this - why is it that

football crowds have an infinite capacity to hold grudges against certain players for misdemeanours real or imagined without being equally particular in their recollection of positive contributions?

When the craggy centre-back receives the ball, why should spontaneous cheers not break out in commemoration of his crucial goalmouth challenge in the last match? When play sweeps across to the tricky little winger, why should there not be generous applause to mark his delightful dribble the previous Saturday. Perhaps it is because there is nothing quite like a good, cathartic hate session safely confined within the ritual of a sporting contest.

Those Charlton fans who strolled away from The Valley in midweek must have felt doubly happy. Natural feelings of excitement and anticipation would have been uppermost in their minds. But Taricco made it so much better. There was an unexpected delight for the home supporters towards the end of the game when the unfortunate full-back found himself with one of Ipswich's rare chances of scoring. His booming drive flew yards high, miles wide.

What could be better than that? As the ball landed high in the stand, thousands of jubilant people stood up and shook their fingers out like so many derisive Wurzel Gummidge. Ah, the beautiful game...



Chris Boardman: 'Now my body seems to have clicked and I have races coming up that I can get my teeth into'

Photograph: Peter Jay

Boardman plans for the pressure

THESE are critical days for Chris Boardman. He has spent the past six months reviewing his "poor" 1997, revising his training system, and recovering from illness.

"This period is the key," he said before returning to his European campaign after a spell at his Cheshire home. "It's critical. My condition is the best it has been all year. I just need a chance to prove it in races."

Six years ago he put British cycling on the Olympic gold standard for the first time in 72 years. He followed that by becoming the first Briton to wear the revered yellow jersey of the Tour de France leader for more than a day, then tackled on three world titles with world records to match.

Inside five years he had achieved what others would consider a lifetime's work,

including an MBE. Amid the triumphs, fate issued a warning. His 1995 Tour de France ended minutes after starting. Boardman was carried from the course with a fractured wrist and ankle.

He came back with a string of victories, including an Olympic bronze, and regained the world hour record (56.375 kilometres) and the world 4,000m pursuit title, also with a world record. Both were in Manchester and to deafening adulation. Then it went quiet, by Boardman's standards.

He wore the Tour yellow last year after winning the opening time trial in Rouen, and won a bronze medal in the World Time Trial Championship in San Sebastian.

"I was scarred by last year's poor results," he said. "I thought I had arrived at the

As Britain's foremost cyclist contemplates a return to the road, Robin Nicholl learns how setbacks have changed his racing regime

point where things stopped going up, and that this could be it. When I got ill early in the season I ignored it somewhat and pushed on with training. It was a mistake."

Boardman caught influenza in February, and spent weeks trying to shake off its effects. "It hit hard and for a lot longer than I wanted. It left me down for weeks. Now my body seems to have clicked, and I have races coming up that I can get my teeth into."

A change in training philosophy was introduced by Denis Roux, the trainer of Boardman's GAN team, after Boardman admitted to overtraining. They cut

out hard riding stints of two to three hours. "It seems those were damaging to me," Boardman said.

Before the inevitable pressure of the Tour de France in July, Boardman faces an important date at home. Britain's new race, the nine-day Proutour, opens on 23 May in Stirling, and he will be backed by the Australians Stuart O'Grady and Henk Vogels, Sweden's Magnus Backstedt, Germany's Jens Voigt, and Italy's Eros Poli.

"It is my only race in Britain and I would dearly like to make the most of it. It doesn't fall at an ideal time, and it is impossible to peak for that and the Tour.

"Tough choices have to be made but hopefully I will get there with some good form. The course doesn't suit me but maybe I can win the leader's jersey in the opening time trial, and then one of our team can take it over."

"The only major difference to our Tour de France plans from previous years is that a high placing in the overall positions is not an initial objective. That takes the pressure off me a little. I will just go for the opening time trial, a stage win, and take it day by day in the mountains."

He will contest the World 4,000m Pursuit Championship, the discipline that made his reputation, "simply because it is convenient to fit in this year. I have nothing to prove there."

The World Time Trial Championship in October is his

final challenge of the year. "It is important that all the major players are there in Holland. I am never consistent at the end of the year, and I want to settle that score before I move on."

His career may stretch to another four years. "To put on a time limit is important," said Boardman, 30 in August and a father of four. "Retirement is very much on my mind. The way I do things is very intense. It gets results but it is very time-consuming."

"I will go for another two years and make it count. Then see what happens. I may find that there are still things I want to achieve and I am motivated to continue. So I could go on for four years."

"I am not one to say I will carry on while I can still get the money. I want to give 100 per cent or not do it at all."

Smith gamble paying off but Cayard is safe

Sailing
By Stuart Alexander
in La Rochelle

THREE important ingredients in sport are tension, tension and tension, and it was there in abundance yesterday as the closing stages of the eighth leg of the Whitbread Round the World Race promised punch-the-air elation for some, anguish for others.

The last 3,400 miles have brought everything from sunshine and calm to icebergs and 40-knot howlers. There have been multiple collisions and encounters with whales, sharks and seals. The lead yesterday was being disputed by two British skippers and a long-time backmarker. And when the dust settles the stage should be set for a final to settle second to fifth places overall.

In former days, the hike across the Atlantic was the run home, most of the major issues, except finishing in one piece, already settled. Yesterday, however, the only near certainty - on a leg that has been as hard, tactical and demanding as the first from Southampton to Cape Town - was that Paul Cayard would bring EF Language into an excited La Rochelle with the race sewn up.

From saying that he would never ease off no matter how solid his lead, Cayard has been happy to surrender the Volvo leg trophy this time. His task was to concentrate on controlling second overall, Gunnar Krantz in Swedish Match, and this week he said the fluke weather conditions could bring them in first and second, or next to last and last. Either suited him as long as they were together and Krantz had no chance to break away and put lots of boats between them, so narrowing the points difference on the leg.

The race for the big silver salver on this leg is between Paul Standbridge, restored to power on Dennis Conner's Toshiba, and Lawrie Smith, finding new force on Silk Cut. And the man who was dead last, John Kostecki in George Collins' Chessie Racing, could bag his third bronze medal slot. These three were pulling further and further away last night.

At the beginning of the week Smith played his first cards by going north and slipping back

to eighth, tumbling nearly 200 miles behind the leader. Grant Dalton. Everyone was anticipating the "wall" of no wind sitting in the Atlantic about 500 miles from the finish. Smith made the big move 700 miles before that. Standbridge, who had been disputing the lead, eventually peeled away to engage Smith.

Smith's early move was brave. However well developed weather pattern prediction programmes have become, they are hard to trust with such a long lead time. But fortune has favoured his bravery and when those weather system cards were fulfilling the prophecy and being dealt again on Tuesday, the gap was down to 20 miles and Dalton was in a muck sweat. "All the betting on board is that Lawrie will win this leg," Dalton said. Other top navigators ripped up their own betting slips and started praying the lead horses would run into a ditch.

Dalton had been involved in his own strategy of protecting his overall third position by keeping himself between fourth-placed Knut Frostad in Innovation Kvaerner and the finish line. That he has done, but has slipped to fifth and lost the points which would have given him a crack at Krantz for second overall on the final leg to Southampton.

A win would not only give Smith two Volvo trophies but alter the mood of the Silk Cut campaign, and even second would make him fifth overall and give him a crack at a podium spot on the sprint into his home territory of the Solent and Southampton. The dismaying in the Southern Ocean when strongly placed to take the honours on leg five now looks more costly than ever.

The extra excitement in the French Atlantic sailing centre was over the performance of the all-women crew on EF Education. Last night they were still fourth and could yet improve. In addition to French skipper Christine Guilloit, they have two of La Rochelle's finest in Isabelle Autissier and Christine Briand to give them local knowledge. And, in terms of all-women crews competing on level terms against men, this leg has consolidated a credibility that has been growing and growing.

Positions, Digest, page 24

The Catherine Oldfield Trophy - a nightmare memory to mar Southport's big day



CHRIS MAUME
SPORT ON TV

THE greatest day in Southport's history comes tomorrow, when they play Cheltenham Town in the FA Umbro Trophy final. The highlight of my football career should have been playing at their ground, Haig Avenue, for Southport Trinity Under-14s in the final of the Catherine Oldfield Trophy. Catherine Oldfield was our manager's mother, so in the competition's inaugural year her trophy should really have been ours.

Sadly, my mistake gave Amber United a 1-0 victory. A cross drifted into the area and I assumed the expression and aspect to which I was all too prone - apparent nonchalance, feet rooted to the spot - as the ball slid past me to their cen-

tre-forward, who did what he had to do. Our goalkeeper, Martin Hodge, who later played in an FA Cup semi-final for Sheffield Wednesday, screamed at me, as he often did. Even my mum berated me afterwards.

As we milled with our medals in front of the main stand (all right, the stand), Southport's manager, Alex Parker, slipped on to the pitch. He took my medal and smiled a little wistfully. I thought he was sad for me at only getting a runners-up medal. The next day I found out he had just been sacked.

All this came flooding back during Southport's brief but eventful appearance in I Dreamed I Won The FA Cup

(ITV), which purloined the old idea of taking a match from the first qualifying round and following the winners of each tie through to the final. It was odd that, having decided to do that, they then broke their own rule, following the Kingstonian v Wivenhoe Town tie with Southport v North Ferriby United.

The difference in support for non-League clubs as opposed to their professional counterparts is a matter of numbers, not intensity. It has to be said, though, that a fanatic whose object of devotion, say, the Ryman League, is in considerably more danger of coming across as eccentric.

If there was one thing you could guarantee from a film of

this nature, it was one or two oddballs, and I Dreamed... duly delivered, serving up Timothy Wells, a perfect Mike Leigh character. He proudly displayed his magnum opus, Kingstonian's complete game-by-game, player-by-player record. "It took me nine months to do this, and it felt like a woman having a baby," he said. As his side entertained Wivenhoe Town of the Ryman League Second Division, he slipped into uncannily accurate John Motson impersonations from the stand - "Oh goodness me, what a fine save that was!" he exclaimed at one point.

The next touch of local colour was added by Jack Cair, Southport's president. He could be played to telling effect

by Warren Clarke, who makes a speciality out of muck-and-brass football men, in a script by David Storey or Alan Sillitoe. Carr, who has a construction company and plays "Onward Christian Soldiers" on his car stereo, fitted perfectly the archetype of the northern self-made chairman who has been around since professional football got going.

A victory over North Ferriby (the chant from the visitors' end of "North Ferriby barny army" had a quaint ring to it) earned Southport a first round tie against York City of the Second Division, but it all went horribly wrong at Haig Avenue. Four goals, all scored by York; two sendings-off, both Southport players; and a vigilante

attack on the referee. We're hard in Southport. Sometimes we go out without our coats.

Interact were scenes from a year in the life of the Cup as it is chaperoned round the country by Laurie Good. "I had a relationship for four years," he said. "That has now ceased to exist. She said I loved the Cup more than I loved her." His smile suggested that she was probably right.

One of his less enjoyable assignments must have been minding the Cup while the Blairs poked around inside it. "What are we supposed to put in this?" asked Cherie. "Tea?" I guess that was what passes for humour in the brave New Labour world of empty, mile-wide grins.

A man with a smile almost as big as Chris Evans - but then you would be happy going off to Florida to have golf lessons from David Leadbetter for Tee Time (Channel 4). It was difficult to know what it was there for. Is it a travelogue? It told you little about Florida. A sports programme? Golf lovers would have gleaned little of use, given that the Great Golf Guru's principal contribution to Evans's game was to fit him up with a device for his arm that resembled Robert De Niro's gun contraption in Taxi Driver. There was one tip, though, if you ever play golf in Florida: don't feed the alligators. That must rate as the most unnecessary advice anyone has ever received.



Mountains' mental maze

AT the start of the Lowe Alpine Western Isles Challenge last week, 24 kayaks left the isle of Barra to cross to South Uist, the next island north. On a stormy morning, rain squalls swept between the mountainous islands, catching the paddlers in open water. The rising wind drove them off course, waves broke over the tiny, struggling craft, and fast rescue boats assisted those who capsized in the turbulent, freezing waters. Three were pulled from the water and the rest made it ashore.

For most this would be excitement enough, but this was just the start of one of the world's great adventure races, involving three days of kayaking, mountain running and cycling, on a race through the Outer Hebrides, taking in the summits of 13 mountains along the way. To reach the finish at the Butt of Lewis lighthouse 200

miles away, would require 50 miles of paddling and climbing 20,000 feet.

In total 18 teams of four set off carrying a kilt pin as a baton, and adding small squares of tartan tweed to it at each checkpoint. The other six competitors climbed out of their boats and on to bikes for the individual category, which is only a little shorter than the full race.

As showers chased rainbows around the sides, cyclists and runners made their way up the coastal dunes and on to the first of the big mountains of the day, Beinn Mhor.

In the constant cold wind that sweeps the islands, they raced over deep, demoralising miles of bog, described by Ross Munro of the appropriately named "Bogstormers" as "like running across miles of sponges". Soon

runners were climbing Eaval, a mountain rising abruptly from sea level, reached by picking a way through a complex maze of lochs.

Back at sea level most teams used bikes to move to the next canoe leg, but Mark Seddon, of Team Lowe Alpine, took the di-

rect route by swimming a tidal loch. At the end of the day everyone took the Caledonian MacBrayne ferry to move on to South Harris, the next link in the island chain, with the exception of a team of Royal Marines. A day that began with their paddler being rescued, ended with

them unable to keep up and missing the boat.

At the cycling start on day two, half the teams set off one way, and half the other, as the route to the checkpoints was left open. It is this that inspires the race organiser, Ian Callaghan, a hotelier on Harris, to devise ever more complex courses.

"It is the mental aspect of the race that really appeals to me", he said. "Teams need to work together on detailed logistical planning, have exceptional navigation skills, and incredible endurance and sporting expertise to complete the challenge."

The weather is part of the test and heavy cloud and snow flurries on Clisam, the highest peak in the isles, and one with precipitous cliffs, was to give Callaghan a few troubled hours, as lost teams failed to find ra-

dio checkpoints. Eventually they turned up and continued on to the finish on the isle of Great Bernera, from where day three began with the canoeists setting off for the standing stones at Callanish on Lewis.

Next came the longest and fastest cycling section, with riders exceeding 45 miles per hour, despite their aching legs, then the paddlers took over again in strong cross winds and a powerful surf, before setting runners off for the last checkpoint, set in the middle of miles of treacherous bog. Then it was the cyclists again for the glory leg to the welcoming beacon of the lighthouse, perched on cliff tops at the very north-west edge of Europe.

First to arrive was Marc Lalthwaite, a sports science teacher at St Helens College, and the individual winner in a total time of 24 hours 19 minutes. The winning team was Sula Sgeir.

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROB HOWARD



Clockwise from top: the exhilarating descent from the summit of Eaval on North Uist; the mountain bike time trial in Lewis provides another challenge on day three; the tension of the handover from canoeist to cyclist is clear on Coll Sands, Lewis; in support, Fiona Young and canine companion wait for the individual winner, Marc Lalthwaite, ready for the next changeover; Team Lowe Life show their delight in finishing at the Butt of Lewis lighthouse; the memorable image of a dawn handover on the beach at Ludag, South Uist, after the first canoe section.



Islander Lam finds a suitable climate on the Tyne



Chris Hewett meets Newcastle's superlative Samoan flanker, whose abundant rugby union talents have proved crucial to the Falcons' Premiership campaign

THREE years ago, we had no one much to play against and nowhere to turn; we were losing players left, right and centre, rugby league was aggressively poaching our best talent and the future looked barren. Thankfully, professionalism has changed everything. We are strong again. We can compete."

Pat Lam was talking about the changing fortunes of Western Samoa, but he might just as easily have been discussing the 15-man revolution in the distinctly untropical union outpost of Newcastle.

The ancient regime of the English game, Bath and Leicester, were consigned to the tumbrels weeks ago and, tomorrow, the 29-year-old flanker will attempt to legitimise the Georgie resurrection by inflicting a swift guillotine job on Harlequins.

Those notoriously fickle aristos with one foot in the Twickenham establishment and the other in the Stock Exchange.

It is no coincidence that both Newcastle and the Samoans, who are relishing a spot at the old guard in next year's World Cup, point to Lam's demonic energy as a primary source of inspiration.

By common consent, he is the player of this inaugural Premiership campaign; no mean accolade when you consider the impacts of Lynagh and Pienaar, Back and Stranely, Lyle and Perry. "Pat has been phenomenal all season," says Rob Andrew, the Falcons' director of rugby, of his single most influential lieutenant. "He gives us such a cutting edge. If

our tight forwards do their job - and they've done it fantastically well, by and large - he roams the paddock and causes mayhem." Andy Robinson, the Bath coach, is equally reverent. "I've nothing but respect for the guy," he oozes.

You will not hear Lam shouting such odds on his own behalf, though. If ever there was a silent rugby assassin, the eternally modest Samoan fits the bill; he goes about his business quickly, decisively and without fuss, his athletic prowess transporting him smoothly to the most distant corners of the pitch, the furthest-flung theatres of combat. Yet he seldom betrays signs of the wear and tear common to his trade; indeed, he barely breaks sweat. Like Muhammad Ali before him, he has mastered the knack of emerging from battle with the unblemished features of a pacifist.

"We've had our problems in London this season," he says, assessing the finale with Quins in the light of defeats at Saracens, Richmond and Wasps. "But it will be different this time. I feel. It's a cup final for us, isn't it? We can see the light at the end of a long, long tunnel and we'll be right up for the contest. We all consider this to be the culmination of two years' work; it's been a long process and we know how much it would hurt us to let it slip now."

"When I arrived at Newcastle in February of last year, there was a great deal of ambition but very little confidence. I remember playing Leicester in the

cup in my second game; they had just played a Heineken Cup final, we'd achieved absolutely nothing and we lost quite comprehensively. There is such a different feeling in the dressing-room now. When we went to Leicester in the league, there was a definite sense that we could win."

"That change of mood comes from togetherness. Last summer, we trained with great intensity before travelling to Agen in France, a place where there are few easy pickings, and winning. Then we won at Bath in our first Premiership game. The spirit began to grow; suddenly, we had an idea of how big a thing we could be involved in."

"It's helped having good people at management level; not just Rob and Steve Bates, but our fitness adviser, Steve Black. He played a particularly important role in getting us back up mentally after our defeats at Saracens and Wasps. He wrote to all of us individually, setting out the scenario for the rest of the season and reminding us how much was riding on it. I found it an incredibly positive gesture. The depression just seemed to disappear."

"But then, I've found this whole Newcastle thing a positive experience. When I played with Auckland in New Zealand, they were already a great side; the dynasty had been in place for 15 years or so and there was an overriding sense of continuity. This has been quite the opposite, a walk into the unknown. We've built it up from a low base, grown our support



Pat Lam lines up for Newcastle in tomorrow's vital game at The Stoop: 'It's a cup final for us' Photograph: Empics

from 800 to 5,000 and started to make an impact in the community. It's been extraordinary, really. We're opening shops and metro stations, just like the football guys."

Lam has another year on his contract and is about to start negotiating an extension. "I intend to retire from international rugby after next year's World Cup and then have three good seasons at club level. Yes, I'd like that club to be Newcastle, but it's up to Rob and the rest of the management team. Just

at the moment, I've got Quins to think about. Not to mention a New Zealand tour and a World Cup qualifying tournament with my country."

Disturbingly for those who remember the physical warfare wreaked by the Samoans during both the 1991 and 1995 World Cups, Lam, who played for New Zealand colts before swearing loyalty to his mother island, says his compatriots "fancy their chances of something better" next year. "We've made two successive quarter-

finals and we will view it as a terrible failure if we don't match that in Wales. We are stronger now than at any time since '91. "After the last tournament, we lost 10 or 11 front-line players and felt isolated by the Tri-Nations deal between New Zealand, Australia and South Africa. Professionalism has allowed us to transform our situation; we have 10 or so guys playing pro rugby here in England and others playing Super 12. When I went home to Auckland a few weeks back, the

New Zealand training camps were full of Samoans; indeed, the schoolboy scene was totally dominated by islanders. Working on the basis that they can't all be All Blacks, we can expect access to a lot of fresh talent."

If the best of that talent turns out to be a Lam-like quality, watch out world. Those Englishmen fazed by the prospect of a torrid summer in Auckland and Dunedin may soon find the attractions of Apia or Moamoa less alluring still.

Brooke determined to upset Georgie appplecart

By Chris Hewett

PERVERSE game, rugby. Harlequins have spent the last eight and a half months as a side issue, an optional extra, the Allied Dunbar Premiership's equivalent of Shakespeare's third spear carrier. Very occasional good days - Heineken Cup wins in Bourgois and Cardiff and a 50-point league victory over Wasps - have been eclipsed by cock-ups against Bristol and London Irish. They are the Charles Hawtrey of the English game; sometimes inspired, but desperately fragile.

Yet the Londoners have it in their power to deny the mean

machine from Newcastle their ultimate prize at a sell-out Stoop Memorial Ground tomorrow and rumour has it that they are deadly serious about upsetting the Georgie appplecart. Certainly, Zinzan Brooke, the All Black legend who took possession of the Harlequins poisoned chalice a couple of months ago, made an early motivational pitch yesterday.

"The players need to show the right attitude, plenty of commitment and stop talking about where they are going for their summer holidays," said the new coach. For those in need of a rough translation, he meant: "Front up, or you'll all be on one

long holiday." As Brooke knows from his rich experience of the New Zealand dressing-room, the threat of a week's notice tends to have a cathartic effect on a slovenly workforce.

On the face of it, the Georgies possess more than enough know-how to chase out the single point they require to repel Saracens' compelling stab at the double. Their form has been none too impressive since back-to-back reverses in the capital last month, but they successfully picked a route through the intensely physical ambushes laid by Leicester and Bath, and as Rob Andrew, their director of rugby, said yesterday:

"Clive is quite keen for me to get involved," acknowledged Ashton, who resigned his coaching role with Ireland in February after disagreements with the

abrasive team manager, Pat Whelan. "Nothing has been decided as yet, though; in this professional era I would need to be under contract."

Ashton was among the coaches when England last travelled to New Zealand in 1985 and Jack Rowell, Woodward's predecessor as national coach and a long-time colleague at Bath, attempted to lure him on board before last season's Five Nations Championship, but was embarrassingly beaten to the punch by the Irish.

The end of season transfer merry-go-round was working overtime yesterday. Sale completed the signing of the former Wigan and Great Britain rugby league centre Barrie-Jon

Mather while preparing to offload Simon Mannix, the All Black stand-off, after Christmas in the direction of Gloucester.

Bath are courting Malcolm O'Kelly, the London Irish lock, and could soon dispense with their two Argentine 1st players, Federico Mendez and German Llanes, while at Northampton there are rumours that their

Leicester at Sunbury tomorrow; their big guns are saving themselves for the might of Rotherham, whom they confront in the first leg of a play-off in Yorkshire on Wednesday night.

Gabriel Fulcher, the Irish international second row squeezed out of the Exiles' first-choice line-up by Nick Harvey and Malcolm O'Kelly, captains the also-rans.

In Wales, Swansea require one point from tonight's game at Pontypridd to deny Cardiff's late surge and claim the Premiership title. The All Whites can even afford to lose, provided they score three tries and collect the requisite bonus.

Scotland and Lions stand-off, Gregor Townsend, may move to Brive, in France.

Blackheath have gone into liquidation. The club, founded in 1858, have called in the receivers following a failed attempt to raise £1m to finance a proposed alliance with Auckland, the New Zealand provincial side.

Woodward courting Ashton for perfect union on summer tour

THE coaching careers of Clive Woodward and Brian Ashton are about to become entwined once more, if the usually reliable Twickenham bush telegraph is anything to go by, writes Chris Hewett.

Woodward, the England coach, wants Ashton, formerly of Bath and Ireland, to join his backroom panel for the summer

tour of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa and, while the Rugby Football Union would not comment on the matter yesterday, agreement was thought to be close at hand.

Woodward has long held Ashton's talents in high regard; indeed, he inherited his legacy when replacing Ashton at Bath last spring. As things

stand, his coaching staff for the tour are John Mitchell, Phil Larder and Dave Alred, none of them a backs specialist. Ashton's appointment would complete the circle admirably.

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Minkies, buzzers and savage casts the choice for reservoir rods



ANNALISA BARBIERI
ON FISHING

HAVING confessed, three weeks ago, that reservoirs put the very fear of God into me, I decided to visit the biggest of them all: Rutland Water in Oakham, Leicestershire - 3,100 acres, and 17 miles of fishing bank. Big. So big that one to a boat is forbidden as it is deemed too dangerous - you have to take a companion. Hambleton, scene of some pretty horrific murders a few years ago, sits in the middle so that the reservoir has two "arms" to it. Later this year Rutland will host the House of Hardy Flyfishing International Championship (the final is 14 to 17 September); 19 July sees the England Youth Championship taking place there and on the same day there is the International Championship for the Disabled.

Rutland was pretty and so vast that it could not be scary, it just looked too natural and it is the synthetic aura of reser-

voirs that I find disconcerting. The Lodge at Rutland is big and well equipped, but a little impersonal. A nice log fire, a cigar humidor and a few leather armchairs would not have gone amiss, something like the facilities at Roger Daltrey's fishery, Lakeland at Burwash. Downstairs from the eating area was the fantastically stocked tackle shop where I got chatting to a helpful chap who was obviously fascinated (in the way that some folk are) that I should voluntarily choose to fish, being a woman and all. He told me that when he first fished at Rutland, he did not catch anything for weeks because he was too proud to ask for help with what flies and flies to use. But when he eventually did ask someone, he started hooking fish. This seemed like a ridiculous waste of time. I always go straight in and ask loads of questions.

It was a freezing cold day

and I decided to accompany my friend Nicki in a casting lesson under the auspices of warden Nigel Savage. But Nigel proved to be anything but. He took Nicki and I on to a large piece of grass and, tying wool on to the ends of our lines, we started casting under his expert tuition. I had been there many times before - casting bits of wool on grass but I always think you can't have too many casting lessons. For an hour I diligently perfected my overhead cast while rain and wind and sleet lashed my face (despite being clad in Clinique's Weather The Elements environmental cream, which I thoroughly recommend to avoid that slapped in the face look that nature can give you). Nigel was too macho to take up the offer of a blob of cream, preferring to go for the "Rutland Blush" instead. But after 90 minutes I had to go for hot chocolate as I was bored with wool. In the

Lodge we discussed how to keep your hands warm when you fish (Patagonia bunting gloves) and why wellingtons never keep your feet toasty (don't wear so many socks). I had to ask Nigel two questions that I am always obsessed with when I visit a reservoir: how deep is the deepest part (about 110 feet) and has anyone died there in recent times (yes: one by drowning from a sail boat, one by having his fishing rod hit by lightning).

Then news reached us that one of our other fishing buddies, Pete, had caught his first reservoir brownie in Whitwell Creek, near to the dam where he was fishing with Mick from the *Angling Times* and wee Alan from Glasgow. I was very excited for him and so we joined up with them at Stockie Bay. We gathered round Pete's 3lb brownie, which just met the minimum 14-inch proviso that Rutland insists on for

brownies. It had gone, he told us, to a Minkie on a size 12 hook, so called because it used to be made of mink. This is quite a queer little fly, big and uncouth out of the water, but with a fair old wiggle about it once submerged. Minkies are well used in Rutland, especially in the spring when fish are feeding on fly. We had barely settled in when Pete, the bastard, hooked another fish. This time a rainbow on a turbo Viva, size 12 hook.

After netting the rainbow, Pete gave his golden spot to Nicki, who had never caught a fish before. We fished quietly for a while until, 20 feet up the bank, I saw Nicki's line go tight. She had a fish on, her first. I was hooked on the bottom and was desperately trying to get free so I could join in her moment of glory; but sadly, she lost it. Joyously however, just five minutes later, her line tightened again and this time

she landed a handsome rainbow. At last Nicki could understand the thrill of a fish on your line. I think she had been starting to wonder what all the fuss was about.

Immediately, I had to have the fly she had, so Nigel put a 16-turn lead (16 turns of a lead thread to weigh the fly down) Chironomid/buzzer on a size 10 hook for me. Because this was a heavy fly, and quite difficult for me to cast, Nigel cast for me. All afternoon. This was utter bliss as it meant that I could fish without getting into a sulk (remember readers, that casting takes years to perfect). And Mr Savage cast just about as far as anyone I've ever seen, the showoff, so that I could fish with lots of line. But nothing took. Nevertheless, I fished until the gentlemen politely said it might be time for lunch. It was tea time.

After scoffing a warming baked potato and sausage,

Reid at head of Nissan charge

Motor racing

NISSAN dominated official testing at Brands Hatch ahead of the next two rounds of the British Touring Car Championship over the weekend.

Three of the team's Primera GTIs were in the top five, with Anthony Reid heading the pack in a time of 44.531 seconds, just inside the Kent track's qualifying record.

"I was fastest in official testing at Donington, but it didn't happen for me there in the race," Reid said. "What we have learned is that the car is very well balanced."

Volvo's Rickard Rydell ran Reid the closest, while the championship leader, James Thompson, was third fastest in his Honda. An impressive fourth was Matt Neal, Nissan's runner in the Autosport Cup for Independents, with David Leslie in the works Primera completing the top five.

The Renault team suffered several problems, among them a lack of grip, as Jason Plato was seventh after two off-track excursions and the reigning champion, Alain Menu, finished 10th fastest.

The former Formula One world champion, Nigel Mansell, testing for Ford ahead of his British Touring Car Championship debut next month, was plagued by mechanical problems with his new Mondeo and could only record a best time of 45.807sec.

China unveils life ban for steroid abuse

Boxing

THE Chinese Swimming Association has announced it is to impose a lifetime ban on swimmers - including first time offenders - caught using steroids.

Wu Shouzhong, CSA official and vice-president of the Chinese Olympic Committee, told an anti-doping conference: "We deeply regretted the series of shameful drug scandals in the 1994 Asian Games and the World Swimming Championships in Perth. The CSA plans to increase the number of drugs tests this year to 600 and impose more severe sanctions."

Four Chinese swimmers were found to have taken the illegal diuretic Triamterene, a masking agent for anabolic steroid use, and banned from participating in the championships in January. The failed tests followed the disqualification of Yuan Yuan after customs officials found 13 vials of human growth hormone in her bags.

In total, 27 Chinese swimmers have tested positive to doping tests in the last decade, with seven testing positive to the steroid dehydrocorticosterone at the 1994 Asian Games in Japan.

The CSA proposed an 11-point action plan to stamp out drug abuse after Australia. In addition, all swimmers will have to put their winnings into a bank account that will only be accessible when they retire and if they have a clean doping slate.

Rutland Water Reservoir: 0780 586441; Syon Park Fishery: 071 494 2660.

All-round change as England ponder specialists

By Derek Pringle
Cricket Correspondent

In their bid to find the best 15 players for next year's World Cup, England's selectors are likely to shift away from the all-rounder rich selections of recent years. With defeat in the West Indies following the successes in Sharjah, David Graveney and his panel see it as their duty to explore different permutations, and see next week's Test matches against South Africa as a necessary part of the learning curve.

New directions do not necessarily mean new players though, and there will almost certainly be recalls for Chris Lewis and Darren Gough. But, if familiar faces abound, there will probably be the odd drop

of new blood as well, which could mean first time caps for the likes of the Sussex captain, Chris Adams, and Leicestershire's Darren Maddy.

Over the last five years, one-day cricket has been a game in constant flux. At any given moment, there appear to be many solutions, each seductive and perhaps successful in its own way. One minute the trend is for the bits-and-pieces all-rounders, the next for the specialists. What is certain, however, is that there is no absolute right way and what worked like a dream in Sharjah, namely the plethora of tidy medium pace, proved glaringly inadequate on the bouncer pitches of the Caribbean.

Like any winning formula, it is the proportion of the ingredients that is important and

Graham Gooch, no doubt sympathising with Adam Holiolake's dilemma in the West Indies, admitted that the selectors would be "looking to give the captain a bit more variation than he had in the West Indies, where all he could do was swap like for like." Hence the need for the extra pace of Gough and Lewis.

Now back to where he started at Leicestershire, after three moves in five years, Lewis is the player many admire but dare not admit their respect. If he is picked, and all the pointers are that he will be, it will be his first game for England since being dropped following the infamous incident during the final Test against Pakistan in 1996 when he blamed his late

arrival at The Oval on a tyre puncture.

Quoted recently, Lewis claims he is now more mature. Which is a bit like Gazza claiming that after a six-year 20-a-day habit, he only has the occasional puff. Perhaps the one-day captaincy at Leicestershire has helped focus his undoubted, but all too erratic, talents. If it has, the selectors are right to give him another chance.

Gough's return is more predictable and, apart from the hamstring injury that kept him out last winter, he would have been involved anyway. In any case, he needs all the bowling he can get at the moment in order to find his rhythm. Taking the new ball, with either Dean Headley or Angus Fraser, ought to help brush away any

remaining cobwebs. Other bowlers in the frame and playing well are Chris Silverwood and Ed Giddins, though Giddins' return after an 18-month ban for a positive drugs test may be a leap too far for the selectors at this stage.

Another player virtually certain to return is the slow left-arm Ashley Giles, another missing from the Caribbean because of injury. With Adam Holiolake, Mark Ealham and Matthew Fleming all likely to continue fulfilling the all-round role, providing the pitches are not overly grassed, England may well play both Giles and the off-spinner, Robert Croft. In fact, it was only 10 years ago that the perceived wisdom for 50-over cricket was that you needed less batsmen, not more.

While it is tempting for the present to see the past as a foreign country, the batting line-up is also likely to return to more conventional tactics, with Nick Knight the sole pinch-hitter, probably not a bad thing against the pace of Allan Donald and Shaun Pollock. There could be no place, then, for Ben Hollis, whose role under his brother has become more confused with the passing of time.

Although there is no doubt that he is worth a place in the squad, Holiolake Jr is not guaranteed a game and the selectors may feel his time would be better spent playing for his county than carrying the drinks for England.

After the success of Holiolake Jr's introduction last year, it might seem appropriate

for the selectors to blood another talented youngster, perhaps Lancashire's Andrew Flintoff, a big, muscular batsman who occasionally bowls. However, the problem of where to fit him in again arises and, with Adams, Maddy and Greene Hick likely to take up two of the five specialist batting slots, Flintoff will probably have to wait a while longer for his chance.

For Adams, a ferocious striker, the oft-discussed and long overdue move away from Derbyshire, at the age of 28, looks as if it will have finally paid off. Frustrated by what he saw as a one-eyed approach by the Derbyshire selectors, Adams' move to Sussex has already resulted in two Championship hundreds and a brace of half-centuries in the Benson and Hedges.

By contrast, Maddy, following an impressive England A tour last winter, has struggled in the Championship, though he has shown rare form in one-day cricket with two big hundreds and an 89 in the zonal round of the Benson & Hedges.

A fine fielder, Maddy can also bowl assorted medium pace; in other words, specialist enough for the selectors with the right amount of multi-dimensionality to please the coach, David Lloyd. Hopefully, the next 10 months could see several more like him emerge. The selectors job will be to find the best of them in time for the World Cup 12 months from now.

ENGLAND (Possible one-day squad): A Holiolake, Flintoff, Knight, Adams, Thorpe, Maddy, Ealham, Lewis, Fleming, Gough, Croft, Giles, Fraser, Headley.

Klusener's day overshadowed by injury to Telemachus

By Derek Pringle
at Worcester

Worcestershire v South Africa

IT WAS the kind of balmy summer day that might have prompted Lou Reed to write "that song" a decade earlier, had he grown up on the banks of the Severn rather than on the Brooklyn side of the East River. Unfortunately, none of the batsmen saw fit to take advantage and it was left to a bowler, Lance Klusener, to steal what thunder there was in the perfect conditions with 4 for 66.

Klusener has few frills, even on a pitch as slow as this one. With an attitude that does not know the meaning of reduced capacity, he simply rolled up his sleeves, bent his back, and put in the work of two men. The dividends were plain to see and while Allan Donald looked sleek but went wicketless - though he did have a catch dropped by Daryll Cullinan at first slip - Klusener hustled his way past early season defences. With a useful yorker to back up a slippery bouncer, he clean bowled both Philip Weston and David Leatherdale, the latter having played the day's best innings.

Klusener also accounted for Graeme Hick, who tamely chipped a slower ball to mid-wicket for 33. It was a sucker dismissal and Hick, looking to nudge the selectors as Michael Atherton had done the previous day, should have known better. It was a careless mistake and it probably put paid to the batsman's chances of making England's one-day squad for next week's Test matches.

Klusener, now 26, has travelled an interesting route. In an age of academics, it is heartening to learn that someone as talented as Klusener rose to prominence via district cricket in Natal. Like Frank Sinatra, he can probably claim to have done it his way.

Although less successful, his colleagues would have benefited from their first proper bowl in English conditions, and there were wickets for Paul Adams and Jacques Kallis. Donald looked fluent, if a little frus-

trated by the pedestrian nature of the pitch, while Mornantau Hayward, a fast bowler from Uitenhage, just looked baffled.

A 21-year old with a mop of fiery red hair, Hayward has apparently been clocked at well over 90 mph. Yesterday, his skiddy pace helped the batsmen time the ball and he was comfortably the most expensive of the visiting bowlers.

Despite Klusener's efforts, probably the most significant event as far as the visitors were concerned happened an hour before the start of play when Roger Telemachus, South Africa's swing bowler and a key part of their one-day side, dislocated his right shoulder.

The injury happened when Telemachus, diving for a catch in fielding practice, landed awkwardly on his right elbow. Unable to relocate the shoulder, the physio, Craig Smith, took him to hospital where it was put back with the help of a local anaesthetic. The prognosis is that the bowler will be out of action for at least six weeks. The feeling is that he may be better off recovering at home rather than on tour, which means a replacement is almost certain.

With only Steve Rhodes, unbeaten on 45, coming close to matching Leatherdale's crisp strokeplay, Worcestershire, no doubt having agreed some kind of quasi one-day run chase to-day, were able to declare on 228 for 6, some 59 runs behind.

In keeping with his decision to bat first on the opening day, Hansie Cronje resisted the temptation to change the batting order. It was a decision that only Gerhardus Liebenberg regretted, when he went for a duck, caught behind off Phil Newton. Gary Kirsten, the one failure in the first innings, followed, though not before he had secured his half-century.

The Australian batsman, Michael Slater, makes his return to the Derbyshire side in tomorrow's AXA League game against Warwickshire at Derby. The opener has yet to bat for the county after he broke a bone in his left hand on the first morning of the season.



Allan Donald in full flight for South Africa yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

Hooper runs rings round Lancashire

By David Llewellyn
at Canterbury

THERE can be few finer sights than that of Carl Hooper in full flow. And here yesterday at times it was not so much a flow as a veritable flood, as Kent finally made a game of it. The West Indies Test all-rounder took on all-comers, treating every Lancashire bowler with disdain as he raced to a magnificent hundred. He was a one-man storm on a sunny day.

His compelling innings totally eclipsed the equally vital innings of David Fulton. The Kent opener had reached his fifty some seven overs prior to Hooper's arrival at the crease, but appeared to get into a rut in the face of some miserly bowling by Ian Austin and Mike Watkinson, the latter wheeling away with his off-spinners.

Hooper had a look for a couple of overs then pounced. De-

spite the fact that Watkinson was managing to turn the ball square at times he was off the mark with the first of his boundaries. In the former Lancashire captain's next over he lofted the ball straight and high back behind Watkinson. A four followed that six and he was away. By the time he reached his fifty off 54 balls, having hit a total of nine boundaries as well as that first six, Fulton, whose own fifty had occupied 115 deliveries, had crept into the 70s.

There was a brief spurt which took Fulton into the 90s, at which point he went back into his shell. Despite Hooper leaving as much of the strike to Fulton as he could, his partner remained rooted on 96, a tantalising one shot away from what would have been only his second championship hundred.

The 25th ball he faced in this unhappy spell was the fatal one. Fulton, looking to work it to leg,

was rapped on the pad. He fell with Kent just two runs away from wiping out Lancashire's substantial 259-run first innings lead. They eased ahead with yet another imperious boundary before Hooper gave the watching Fulton an object lesson in dealing with the nervous nineties.

In one over from the luckless Ian Austin he hammered 23 runs which saw him rocket from 89 to 112. The hundred was brought up with his fourth six, this one dispatched over mid-wicket, off the 99th ball of his innings. It was the 41st century of his career and the 17th he has scored for Kent. In addition to the big hits there was a further 15 boundaries in what was his first hundred in the championship since July 1996. As a measure of the pace of Hooper's scoring, the 50 partnership for the fourth wicket with Alan Wells took just 44 balls, and Wells contributed just three runs to it.

Kirtley burst is well timed

Nottinghamshire 275 and 122
Sussex 324 and 74-6
Sussex win by four wickets

JAMES KIRTLEY caught the eye of England's chairman of selectors, David Graveney, with a match-winning performance in Sussex's four-wicket victory at Trent Bridge.

The 23-year-old pace bowler claimed career-best figures of 7 for 29 and a match return of 10 for 88 to set up the win, Sussex's second in the championship. Kirtley destroyed Notts's second innings, producing a burst of 6 for 3 in 39 deliveries as Notts crumbled to 23 for 7.

He was blissfully unaware of Graveney's presence until he had caused most of the damage. "I didn't realise he was watching until I was into my ninth over and I was too tired to worry about what I might do after that," said Sussex's hero.

"I suppose I can't have done my chances any harm but talk of England is a bit premature and my main concern at the moment is helping Sussex do well."

He added: "Jason Lewry deserves a lot of credit too, because he swung the ball and took three key wickets."

Nottinghamshire did limit the damage by recovering to 122 all out before making Sussex battle hard for their target.

Langer drives way to double century

By Henry Blofeld
at Lords

JUSTIN LANGER showed why he deserves the confidence and trust Middlesex have placed in him when the 27-year-old Australian made 233 not out against Somerset yesterday, the fifth double century in his tally of 20 first-class hundreds.

Langer and the 20-year-old David Nash (114) put on 222 for the third wicket, making full use of a pitch which had now rolled out into the flattest of surfaces. They have left Middlesex, who declared their second innings at 450 for 4, well placed for their first County Championship victory of the season in a stand which was full of lovely strokes and a compliment to a perfect early summer's day.

Langer, who stands 5ft 8in, is a chunky left-hander with all the purpose-built effectiveness of his fellow countrymen, Allan Border. Left-handers who are lacking in inches are seldom as graceful as their taller fellow travellers, although another Australian, Neil Harvey, was a shining exception.

Langer's best stroke is his off-drive, which he plays with a power which comes almost entirely from a lovely natural sense of timing. He was 80

when play began on the third day and, in the second over, leaned forward to Graham Rose and pushed the ball past mid-off with timing that gave the fielders no chance.

He straight-drove Andy Caddick decisively for four to reach his 100, but came to his 200 off a wild drive which might have been caught above his head by first slip.

The cover drive of Kevin Shine, which had taken him to 185, was another classic. He celebrated the award of his county cap during the tea interval by coming down the pitch and pull-driving Keith Parsons for his only six. In all, he faced 367 balls and hit one six and 33 fours.

It was greatly to the credit of Nash that he was in no way outdone. He, too, drove handsomely, timed the ball nicely off his legs, and always looked composed. This was his second hundred and his highest score.

After Nash had been caught at slip, Keith Brown, playing most competently as always, helped Langer add 119 for the fifth wicket before the declaration.

Somerset's second innings was only in the fourth over when Michael Burns was, almost inevitably, caught by Langer at third slip off James Hewitt.

Cricket scoreboard

British Assurance County Championship

Third day of four

Durham v Essex

CHESTER-LE-STREET

Durham won toss

Durham: First innings 276 (M A Gough 62, M A Gough 4-48)

Essex: First innings 185

Durham: Second innings

Overnight: 124 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

Leicestershire v Gloucestershire

First innings 381 (B F Smith 121, N J Wells 120, A M Smith 5-68)

Gloucestershire: Second innings

Overnight: 140 for 8

J Llewellyn 104 for 8

J Llewellyn 104 for 8

J Llewellyn 104 for 8

J Llewellyn 104 for 8

J Llewellyn 104 for 8

J Llewellyn 104 for 8

J Llewellyn 104 for 8

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J Llewellyn 104 for 8

J Llewellyn 104 for 8

J Llewellyn 104 for 8

J Llewellyn 104 for 8

Kent v Lancashire

CANTERBURY

Kent won toss

Kent: First innings 186 (M A Batham 73)

Lancashire: First innings

Overnight: 49 for 8

N W K Hogg 49 for 8

N W K Hogg 49 for 8

N W K Hogg 49 for 8

N W K Hogg 49 for 8

N W K Hogg 49 for 8

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N W K Hogg 49 for 8

N W K Hogg 49 for 8

N W K Hogg 49 for 8

Northants v Yorkshire

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Northants won toss

Northants: First innings 149 (D E Maltby 64)

Yorkshire: First innings

Overnight: 124 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

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M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

M A Gough 104 for 3

Nottinghamshire v Sussex

TRENT BRIDGE

Nottinghamshire won toss

Nottinghamshire: First innings 275 (J Llewellyn 104 for 8)

Sussex: First innings

Overnight: 140 for 8

J Llewellyn 104 for 8

J Llewellyn 104 for 8

J Llewellyn 104 for 8

J Llewellyn 104 for 8

J Llewellyn 104 for 8

J Llewellyn 104 for 8

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J Llewellyn 104 for 8

J Llewellyn 104 for 8

Worcestershire v

Rangers search for season's redemption with Hearts and soul

TODAY Rangers have the chance to salvage something from the most confusing season in living memory. If they do beat Hearts and win the Scottish Cup at Parkhead, it will be a fitting finale to Walter Smith's reign at Ibrox. Having recently steered the club to a record-equalling nine championships in a row, helped the club to previously unimagined economic strengths and coaxed top international stars from all over the world to come to Glasgow, he has decided to quit. Amazingly, some of the Ibrox faithful have branded him a failure because they were pipped at the post this time.

Over in the east end, Celtic fans are almost in mourning after this season's championship and Coca-Cola Cup double.

This follows the departure in acrimonious circumstances of their manager, Wim Jansen. So, just days after one of the most important and satisfying titles in the club's history, fans are calling for the resignation of the managing director, Fergus McCann, and the general manager, Jock Brown, because of their part in the Dutchman's departure.

Down at the bottom, however, Alex McLeish, the new manager of relegated Hibernian, was being feted as a hero after his team had drawn their last game of the season against the mighty Kilmarnock. In this climate Craig Brown had better not lead Scotland in a successful World Cup campaign or he will be sacked before the end of June.

Back in domestic reality Hearts have in many ways provided the story of the 1997-98 season. Jim Jeffries, their manager, kept his side up alongside the Old Firm for 90 per cent of the season, using a fraction of the resources. For the first time in a decade, the effortless domination of the Glasgow giants was seriously challenged.

The Tynecastle club's progress has been the healthiest aspect in the whole of the Scottish game this year. While challenging for the league they also managed to produce a number of talented home-grown players. With Neil McCann and David Weir they have begun to mine a seam that many up here thought had offered up its last nuggets.

Hearts and their fans only



Pat Nevin, the Kilmarnock and former Scotland winger, on the real heroes involved in today's Scottish Cup final

now appear to have almost fully recovered from the trauma of their last serious assault on the championship. In 1988 they lost the last game of the season to an inferior Dundee side, conceding two late goals, and so handed Celtic the title on a plate.

This season title hopes had evaporated a month earlier and since then they have been able to coast along, concentrating their thoughts on the Cup final instead. This may well be their biggest advantage today. They will be fresh, focused and

perfectly prepared for the last game of the season this time, and the spectre that has haunted the club for a decade could be banished for good.

Rangers, on the other hand, have a few more recent ghosts to exorcise. Even though they stuttered in the run-up, memorably (for me anyway) losing against Kilmarnock at home in the second to last game of the season, they still had hopes of gaining that record 10th championship in a row up until the last moment.

This tortuous run-in caused more than the obvious psychological damage. They have run themselves to exhaustion chasing Celtic, incurring injuries and suspensions to key players on the way. The latest casualties are Jörg Albertz and Jonas Thern. Their talisman, one Alastair McCoist, looks to have finally lost his battle to feature in the World Cup, having been left out of the Scotland squad which will soon fly off to America for final preparations.

A few years back I remember the cheeky smiling one withdrawing from a Scotland friendly because he was "mentally bruised" after losing a Scottish Cup tie. I think he could well be mentally broken by this late blow from Craig Brown.

Paul Gascoigne, meanwhile, is still sorely missed at Ibrox and Brian Laudrup has fallen out with the club on the eve of his departure to Chelsea.

With all this turmoil Hearts may well just have the edge in this one and it could leave Rangers without any silverware for the first year since Roy George was the new kid on the block.

For years the Scottish press have bemoaned the standard of the game because no teams were nearly strong enough to challenge Rangers. Now those same people are complaining at the paucity of the standard because Rangers cannot even be sure of beating Aberdeen, Hearts and Kilmarnock. You just can't win with some people.

Of course there is a problem

with the standard up here. Purely for financing reasons the English leagues should be better than their Scottish equivalents; they would be abject failures if they were not. However, with the new Premier League set-up and the certain increase in money available through TV revenue, sponsorship and advertising, there will be a wonderful opportunity to raise the standard.

There will be an increase in quality foreign imports but it is imperative also to invest a good chunk of the extra money on the development of young home-grown players. Hopefully those in control of Scottish football will be able to behave in a sensible and imaginative way. Keeping the most talented and successful coaches involved in the game would be a good start.



Stefano Salvatori: 'Sometimes money does not make a team'

Salvatori the inspirer seeks Cup salvation

IN ITALY, it is common practice for statues of saints to be carried through the streets on their celebrational feast day. If Stefano Salvatori helps Hearts win their first piece of silverware in 36 years today, he might be carried all the way back to Edinburgh.

Salvatori's presence in the Scottish Cup final at Celtic Park denotes that the east end of Glasgow will be turned into Little Italy for a day. Apart from the presence of the former Milan player in Jim Jeffries' ranks, Rangers will employ three of his compatriots as they seek to avoid finishing the season empty handed for the first time since the 1985-86 season.

The former Perugia pair of Rino Gattuso and Marco Negri will be part of Walter Smith's thinking for his final game in charge of the side he made the epicentre of Scottish football over the last decade. So too will be the former Fiorentina centre-half, Lorenzo Amoroso.

With neat symmetry, Amoroso played against Salvatori in the Hearts midfielder's last game in Italy two years ago. The lucky omen for Rangers fans is that it, too, was a final - the Italian Cup, Fiorentina v Atalanta - and that Amoroso's team won.

"It was a two-leg match," recalled Amoroso, "and we won the first match in Florence and then I scored in the second leg when we won 3-1. The Italian Cup has become more important to coaches and clubs in recent years but it still does not have the tradition that the Scottish Cup has."

Amoroso has tasted that tradition first hand. He made his

An Italian can today bring Scottish Cup glory to Hearts, or see three compatriots take the honours for Rangers. Phil Gordon reports

much delayed debut for Rangers last month on the same pitch he will roam today in the 2-1 semi-final win over Celtic.

It was an occasion which moved the giant 27-year-old, who had been ruled out almost from the day he joined the Ibrox side with an Achilles injury which required three operations and two months of rehabilitation back in the old country.

"I only planned to sit on the bench, not play," said Amoroso, "because I was not really ready. But Gordon Petric got injured and I came on after 20 minutes. Playing in that kind of game is a test of a player's character. But you cannot be afraid to play in such games if you are a professional."

"It was marvellous to hear a name being sung and then to discover the sensations of being a footballer that you have missed for so long: making tackles, shouting to team-mates. The result was wonderful."

At Hearts, Salvatori is perhaps grateful not to be weighed down with tradition: because all of it is negative. Hearts' record as Scotland's all-time chokers - they have lost a Scottish Cup final in every decade since they last won in 1956 - is not something that concerns the Italian.

"The past is not important," said the 31-year-old ballwinner. "It is the future that is important." Salvatori, who started his career with Milan before moving on to

Florentina and Atalanta, came to Edinburgh in 1996, two months after Hearts' most recent Cup final capitulation, a 5-1 hammering by Rangers.

In that time, Salvatori has been impressed by the club's growth both on and off the pitch. Sell-out crowds of 18,000 packed Tynecastle during the league season as the club appeared on the brink of ending its 36-year silverware famine by winning the title. Now, the Italian insists, those fans are rightly demanding the Cup as compensation.

"We lost the title," he says ruefully. "We drew too many matches we should have won. It is difficult for us to compete with Celtic or Rangers because of the money they have to buy players, but sometimes money does not make a team. That only happens if you work together."

Certainly that has been the evidence both at Rangers this season, and at Salvatori's old club, Milan. He played 15 Serie A games in 1989-90 but was left in the stand for the European Cup final that year and competition with Frank Rijkaard, Ruud Gullit and Marco van Basten was too fierce to hang around for long, so he sought his fortune elsewhere.

At the same time, a young defender called Amoroso was making a name for himself down at Bari. "I joined them when I was 17 and I played alongside

David Platt for a few months, before I moved away on loan."

Amoroso eventually helped Bari win promotion and Fiorentina bought him to add some steel to the side behind the cavalier talents of Gabriel Batistuta. However, he had a hankering for Britain and, although Manchester United showed a late interest, Amoroso plumped for Rangers, joining for £4m last June.

"I told my agent that I had a good feeling about Walter Smith from the moment I met him," explained Amoroso. "He listens to players and helped me so much, especially when I had my terrible injury. He was like a father to me."

Naturally, Amoroso and the other Rangers players wish to give Smith the Scottish Cup as a leaving present before he makes way for Dick Advocaat. "It would be nice for Walter to win his last game," he says, "but it will be difficult. Hearts are a good team, with great pace in attack, especially Neil McCann and Stéphane Adam."

For Salvatori, winning would represent the last piece of the footballing jigsaw he feels his adopted city needs to challenge the Old Firm duopoly.

"We have got some fantastic players," the Italian enthuses. "We also play some of the most attractive football in Scotland. With a few more players to strengthen the squad, we can go on to many successes. We have the capacity to create a dynasty here like Milan or Juventus." Or Rangers?

"On the pitch, we have a 50-50 chance. You never know."



Lorenzo Amoroso: 'I had a good feeling about Walter Smith'

In demand Seric grapples with country versus country dilemma



AROUND THE WORLD

BY RUPERT METCALF

Australia/Croatia

THE 19-year-old midfielder Ante Seric has a dilemma to resolve before Croatia face Australia in a friendly on 6 June. He has been named in both countries' squads.

Seric, an Australian Institute of Sport graduate, has to decide whether to represent Australia or his parents' homeland of Croatia, where he plays his club football for Hajduk Split. On Thursday he was named in Terry Venables' squad for the friendly in Zagreb, while yesterday he found himself selected in Miroslav Blazevic's party of 25 for that game and also the

Croatia coach's provisional World Cup squad.

Brazil

BRAZIL'S World Cup preparations began inauspiciously this week as a bout of influenza, a spate of injuries and club commitments reduced the first training session to just nine players.

It quickly became clear that the coach Mario Zagallo, who had hoped to start preparing his team in earnest this week, would have to wait until the team arrived in France before getting down to any serious work.

The central defender

Marcio Santos was dropped from the squad because of a pulled muscle on Wednesday, while the next to drop out of the tournament, on Thursday, was Flavio Conceicao.

Andre Cruz, of Milan was named as the replacement for Marcio Santos while Ze Carlos of São Paulo came in for Flavio Conceicao. Romario and Cesar Sampaio are also on the injured list, while seven players were allowed to remain with their clubs until next week.

Azerbaijan

THE team with the most points has won the league

championship of Azerbaijan - for a change. Kepez Ganca sealed the title in the former Soviet republic on Thursday.

Last year, in an unusual experiment, Neftchi Baku collected the most points but second-placed Garabag Agdam were declared champions - on the basis of their junior team's better performance in a separate youth league.

The Azeri championship is rarely orthodox. Calculating the league table this year had been complicated by the exclusion of two clubs from the 14-team top division in mid-season for failing to meet financial commitments.

Andorra

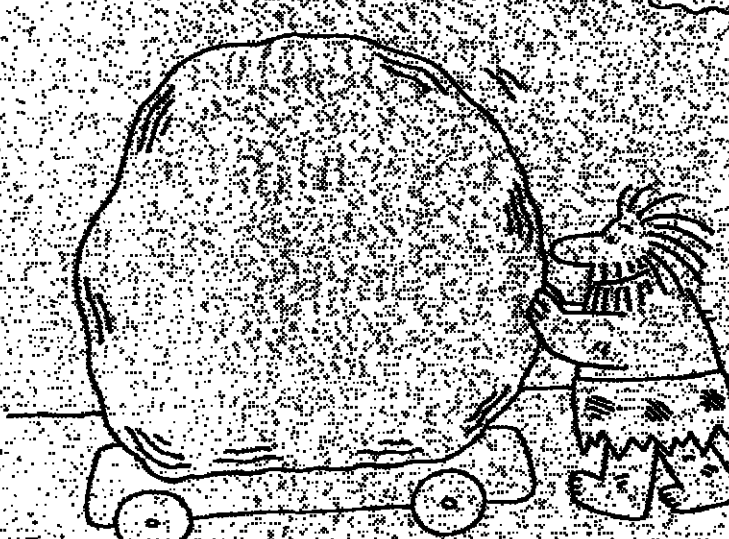
CLUB Esportiu Principat - known locally as Charlie's Restaurant - secured their second successive Andorran title this week, after finishing the season unbeaten with a 5-0 win at Magatzems Lima.

The team's nickname comes from the meeting place of the Andorran branch of the Real Madrid supporters' club, who formed Club Esportiu. They will be competing in the UEFA Cup again next season. Last August, as Andorra's first European representatives, they were thrashed 17-0 on aggregate by Dundee United.




25 days... until the World Cup finals begin in France...

The Norwegian midfielder Trond Egil Solvetd has pulled out of his country's World Cup squad to be present at the birth of his second child. The 30-year-old Coventry City player has informed the Norwegian football federation that, rather than play in the finals in France next month, he wants to stay in the West Midlands with his family. Solvetd, a £500,000 signing from Rosenborg Trondheim last summer, has played 86 games in his first season in English football and, after playing in Norway's last two internationals, was a near certainty for a place in the starting line-up at France 98. Yesterday, though, he said: "I have told them I will not be going even if I am picked. My wife is pregnant and I will be staying in Coventry to take care of my family. We shall spend the summer in England."




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Vieira vies for Double glory and French passage



Glenn Moore meets the combative 21-year-old midfielder who has won admirers at Highbury and beyond this season, culminating perhaps in FA Cup triumph today and a place in France's World Cup squad

THEY will look an odd pair when, as they surely will, they square up to each other at Wembley today. The short, blond Yorkshireman and the tall, black Senegalese. It will be not so much eyeball-to-eyeball as forehead-to-chin but, do not be mistaken, as David Batty and Patrick Vieira snarl at each other there will be mutual respect behind the machismo.

Batty, says Vieira, "is the best English midfielder in the Premiership." This is not a view everybody shares but its recipient is unlikely to be any less effusive about Vieira. While the defenders have been lauded and the star Dutch striker rewarded, the Highbury faithful have no doubts their Dakar-born French international midfielder is the key man behind Arsenal's march towards the Double.

One long-time season-ticket holder said yesterday that Vieira was in the process of supplanting Ian Wright as Highbury's cult hero. One indication of this is that the first chant is now the poetic: "He comes from Senegal, he plays for Arsenal, Vieira, Vieira".

The 21-year-old was an instant hit at Arsenal, making his debut as a substitute against Sheffield Wednesday in September 1996, the same night as Arsène Wenger greeted the faithful by video link having been confirmed as manager. He quickly helped turn a 1-0 deficit into a 4-1 win and a legend was born.

Vieira has since forged an impressive midfield bulwark with his compatriot Emmanuel Petit which, said Martin Keown, "has certainly made our job easier in defence - it will probably extend my career." Both Frenchmen have been included in Aimé Jacquet's 28-man pre-World Cup squad and, while Petit appears resigned to missing out, Vieira thinks a good performance today could help him make the finals. "It is a very important match, the last before the 22 is named," he said. "It is on French TV and everybody will be watching it around the world. It is a very important game for us. Manu [Petit], Nicolas [Anelka] and myself all have a chance, we are all 50-50."

Among those watching will be relatives in Senegal where the game is being relayed live by the cable channel Canal+

With a national average of one television for every 30 people, there will be much crowding around to see Senegal's most famous export since Youssou N'Dour, the pop singer who, incidentally, performs the official World Cup anthem.

Vieira left Senegal, a former French west African colony, aged seven, to join his mother, a school dinner lady in a mundane Parisian suburb. He joined Tours, then Cannes, where Luis Fernandez gave him his debut at 18. He was soon a captain but, almost as quickly, became a reserve as Milan signed and forgot him. He played just twice in Serie A with his most dramatic involvement coming as a passenger when George Weah, who had taken him under his wing, wrote off his car on the Côte d'Azur.

'He reminds me of Graeme Souness, harassing players, setting the tempo, dominating games with his fitness'

Fortunately, he had earlier made a better impression in the area, playing for Cannes against Monaco. "I knew that I must follow his progress," said Wenger, then at Monaco. "I saw his quick responses, quick movement of the feet for such a tall player and that he could already pick the right forward pass." Wenger later recommended him to Highbury and, for £3.5m, Milan were persuaded to sell.

The presence of Wenger, who had been given a glowing reference by Weah, was a major influence in his coming. "I knew his training would teach me a lot," Vieira said. "He is a good manager if you have a problem you can talk to him, there is a very good dialogue between manager and player." Vieira speaks good English in a soft voice using his hands - one adorned with a chunky watch, the other with a ring with the initial P on it - to add emphasis.

When he stands he looks lean and leggy, almost gawky, but he moves with surprising elegance and deceptive speed on

the pitch, eating up the ground like Curtly Ambrose running between the wickets. At Barnsley last month he raced for goal pursued by Martin Bullock and Scott Jones. Neither are slouches but, giving away eight and 11 inches respectively, they made a comical sight as their little legs frantically tried to catch his spidery figure.

Vieira's own legs appear telescopic as they snake out to intercept or tackle. Mark McGhee, recalling the semi-final with Wolves, said: "He was the fittest player I've seen in a long time. At his best he reminds me of Graeme Souness, harassing players, setting the tempo, dominating games with his fitness. He breaks things down, chases people into making mistakes and has a tremendous tackle. He makes a challenge, the ball goes for a throw-in and there he is again, as if he hasn't broken sweat."

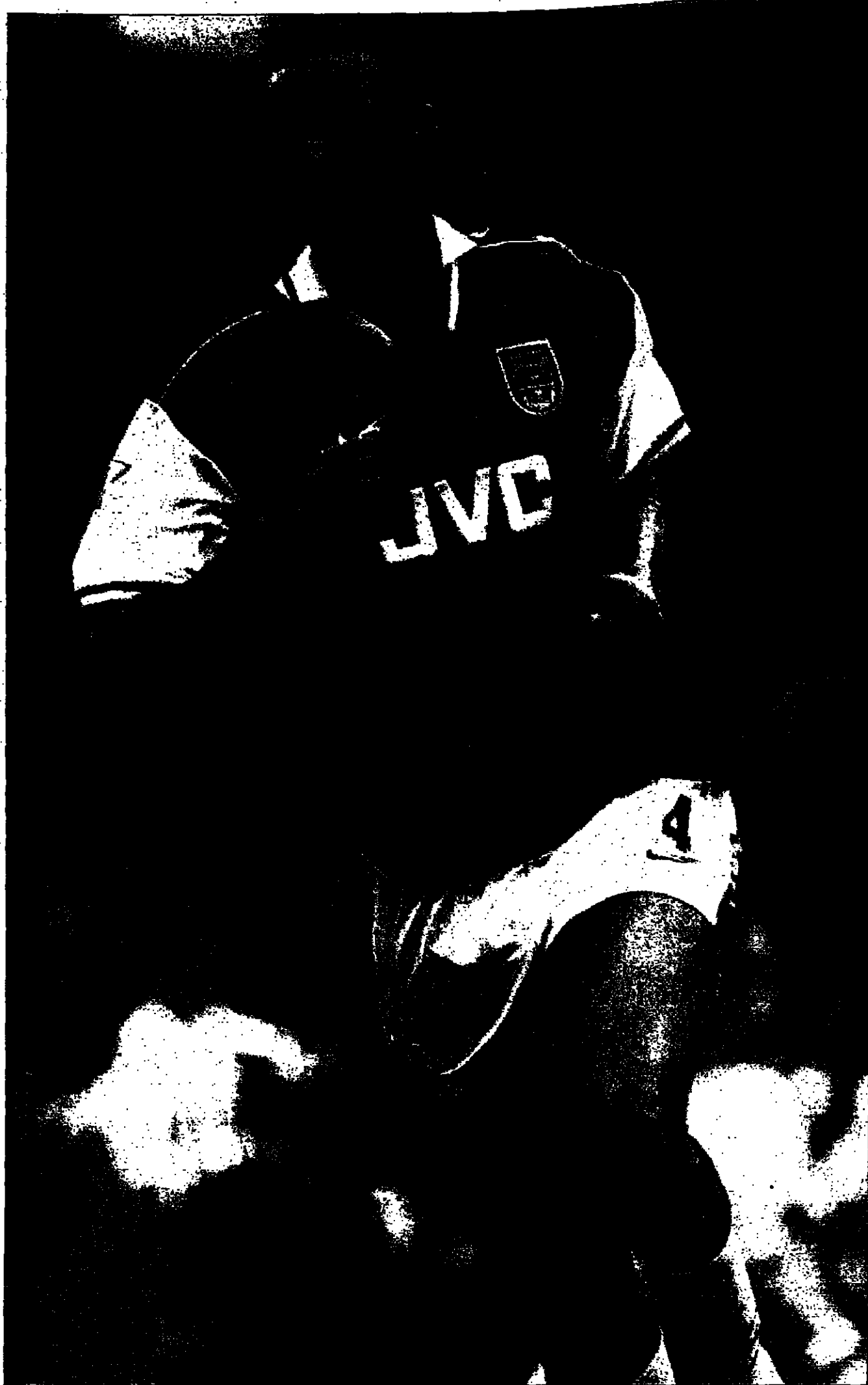
With an impressive first touch, a powerful shot and a steely determination he appears the complete midfielder but he is not perfect. He has been sent off twice, booked 11 times and is facing an Football Association inquiry over video evidence that he kicked West Ham's Ian Pearce off the ball during the FA Cup tie at Upton Park.

Today's referee is Paul Durkin, England's World Cup referee who sent off Peter for laying his hands on him during the Aston Villa match at Highbury. Durkin did, however, rescind a yellow card he had given to Vieira in March after seeing the video.

That decision came as Vieira was improving his record with only one booking in the latter stages of the season. "When you play in my position it is very difficult to avoid red and yellow cards because you need to have determination and aggression," he said. "I spoke to the manager and some players but I haven't changed. I keep the same determination."

What has changed is his attitude to referees and, with Arsenal's improvement in form, his mood. "When I was not playing so good, and we lost, I was blaming the referee. I needed to accept it was my fault. I got so many cards because I was talking too much."

Both he and the Highbury faithful will want his football to do the talking today.



Patrick Vieira enjoys his goal against Newcastle last month in another impressive performance

Photograph: Paul Webb

Wenger philosophy expanding Arsenal's rich potential

WHEN asked recently to compare Arsenal's present team with their 1971 Double winners George Graham took refuge in a joke: "We had more class," he chuckled. Graham - "given time" he says - had class, so did Charlie George, whose goal in extra-time against Liverpool at Wembley added the FA Cup to the championship Arsenal secured with a victory at Tottenham six days earlier. But Arsenal's success in Graham's day resulted mainly from graft, good organisation and the spirit typified by Frank McLintock's inspirational leadership.

Overall comparison is pointless anyway. The "foreigners" (unavailable to England's national team) at Highbury in 1971 - Graham, McLintock, Pat Rios and Bob Wilson - were Scots and Irish. Now French is the

language and the two most gifted attackers are Dutch. Who among Arsenal's faithful 27 years ago could have imagined the appointment of a foreign coach and an infusion of talent from overseas made possible by television funding?

Despite England's success in the 1966 World Cup and club achievements in Europe, English football was thought to be technically bereft and backward tactically. Great European stars of the time scoffed at the idea of playing here. Thus two factors have combined to suggest that Arsenal can now consistently challenge Manchester United: Wenger's philosophy and his knowledge of Europe (especially in France) when seeking to expand Arsenal's potential.

In one important respect, conforming to a tradition laid down in the 1930s, Arsenal resemble the team (coached by Don Howe) with which Bertie Mee won the Double and those that won two championships under Graham: Adventure is all well and good but defence remains a priority. Arsenal's solid back line in 1971 was made up of Rice (now Wenger's assistant), McLintock, Peter Simpson and Bob McNab with Peter Storey in the first line of trenches.

Using experience gained when managing Millwall, recruiting Lee Dixon, Steve Bould and Nigel Winterburn from the game's lower reaches, Graham built a defence around Tony Adams that helped bring two further championships and the FA Cup to Highbury. With the

Despite the foreign influence, Ken Jones sees an Arsenal built on old-fashioned grit

addition of Martin Keown for Bould it is still in place, but the problem presented to Wenger by the aging of this unit has been eased by his French central midfield pairing of Patrick Vieira and Emmanuel Petit.

The victory at Old Trafford that turned things Arsenal's way saw Vieira and Petit at their most influential. "They can play it as you want," said Graham. "Excellent quick passers, strong in possession and mean when necessary."

After Arsenal drew with Leeds at Elland Road on the opening day, Graham tipped them to take the Premiership title from Manchester United:

"Some people thought I was making a case for my own team, but I really did feel that Arsenal had all it took to be champions."

Not that everything worked entirely to the satisfaction of Arsenal's supporters. Dennis Bergkamp's classic scoring feats were interspersed with dilatory contributions, Marc Overmars was ineffective until halfway through the season and Nicolas Anelka looked out of his depth. Neither did the adventure Wenger encouraged in his defenders wash with everyone. "They'll win nothing unless those guys are told to concentrate on what they are best at,"

a rival manager said after Arsenal lost 3-1 at home to Blackburn Rovers. Eventually, Wenger's team came to have shape and consistent purpose, displaying qualities that had not previously been associated with the '97/98 Arsenal.

Two of the things remembered from 1971 are directness and the unflagging effort typified by George Armstrong's selfless industry on the wing. Attacks were often built on long forward passes to John Radford and Ray Kennedy with Graham and George moving in support. "A big thing was sticking at it, grinding out results when we played poorly," McLintock recalled.

If this was not quite the image people had of Graham as a player it stood as a cornerstone of his philosophy when

appointed manager in 1986. Arsenal, as ever, would be hard to beat. Again a solid, intelligent defence, an outstanding goalkeeper (Graham set a record for the position when buying David Seaman) and no truck with players, however skilful, who did not put in a maximum effort. Who could argue with two championships, the FA Cup, the League Cup and the European Cup-Winners' Cup in eight seasons?

At first thought to be a risky appointment, Wenger has transformed Arsenal's reputation, adding flair to the qualities for which they are famous. Still difficult to score against, as their defensive record up to securing the title testifies, they now have enough style to help produce that rare event - an entertaining Cup final.

Doing the double

LEAGUE AND FA CUP DOUBLE WINNERS

1988-89 Preston North End: Best victory 3-0 in the final at Wembley in front of a then record crowd of 22,000. De-whurst, Ross and Thompson scored the goals.
1986-87 Aston Villa: Best victory 5-2 in the final at Crystal Palace in front of 65,000. Dwyer, Campbell and Crabtree scored for Villa, Bell and Hurley for Everton.
1960-61 Tottenham Hotspur: Best victory 4-0 in the final at Wembley in front of 100,000. Smith and Dwyer did the damage to secure London's first league and cup Double success.
1970-71 Arsenal: Best victory 2-1 in the final at Wembley to equal the achievement of their north London rivals Spurs 10 years earlier. Eddie Kelly and Charlie George scored for Arsenal, Highway for Liverpool.
1959-60 Manchester United: Best victory 4-0 in the final with Cantona (two penalties), Hughes and McClair on target. United also won the Premiership by eight points from Blackburn.
1955-56 Manchester United: Secured their record double in as many years with a single Eric Cantona goal against Liverpool in the final. Won the Premiership by four points from Newcastle.

North London's years of plenty: How Arsenal have enjoyed regular success since their 1971 Double triumph

(1970-71) THE DOUBLE

TO win the Double is a marvellous feat in any circumstances but Arsenal's triumph in 1971 was all the more extraordinary given that arch rivals Leeds led the First Division by seven points as late as the end of February. If that were not enough, only a hotly-disputed late penalty kept Arsenal in the FA Cup after Stoke had led their semi-final 2-0. But Bertie Mee's side ended the League season with a run of 11 wins in 13 matches, six of them 1-0, including the last game of the season when Ray Kennedy's 88th-minute header against Tottenham at White Hart Lane clinched the Championship. Five days later, Arsenal trailed Liverpool 1-0 in extra time at Wembley but fought back to equalise through Eddie Kelly before a searing shot by Charlie George (above) secured the Double eight minutes from time. The picture of George flat on his back on the Wembley turf became the symbol of Arsenal's season.



(1978-79) A WEMBLEY EPIC

Arsenal's fourth FA Cup final in seven seasons - they had lost to Leeds in 1972 and Ipswich in 1978 - produced possibly the most amazing finish in the competition's history. Five minutes from time, Arsenal, managed by Terry Neill, led Manchester United 2-0. But then United scrambled not just one goal from Gordon McQueen but another by Sammy McIlroy from which they gained such momentum it seemed they could even snatch victory. Instead, a weary Liam Brady took the ball forward again for Arsenal, released Graham Rix on the left and Alan Sunderland found the energy to arrive on the blind side of United's defence. To turn Rix's deep far post cross into an astonishing winning goal.

(1986-87) 'JUST THE START'

SO proclaimed George Graham, the man of the match from Arsenal's 1971 Wembley triumph, as his first season as manager brought another slice of Cup glory, this time in the Littlewoods Cup. Having achieved his first priority of establishing a formidable back four - Arsenal set a club record run of 22 matches unbeaten between September and January - Graham restored the side's spirit, celebrated by the fans in song. "One-nil down, two-one up, that's how Arsenal won the Cup" became an anthem after two goals by Charlie Nicholas cancelled out Ian Rush's opener for Liverpool at Wembley, the third time Graham's team had recovered from a goal down on the way to lifting the trophy.



(1988-89) MICHAEL THOMAS AND 'THAT' GOAL

IN the last week of a season remembered bleakly for the Hillsborough disaster, Liverpool were poised to better Arsenal's proudest achievement by becoming the first side to win the Double twice. To do so, they had to beat Everton at Wembley, win their penultimate League match against West Ham (at home) and not lose their final fixture against erstwhile leaders Arsenal - also at home - by two goals. Victors by 3-2 in the Cup final, they thrashed West Ham 5-1 and the idea that they would then slip up at Anfield seemed unthinkable, even after Alan Smith had stolen a 1-0 lead seven minutes into the second half. The score remained unchanged with 90 minutes up - then Lee Dixon booted the ball upfield, Smith lobbed it into the path of Michael Thomas and (above) the Championship acquired the most dramatic of all its final twists.

(1990-91) A BRAWL AND A JAIL SENTENCE BUT VICTORY AGAIN

THE infamous Old Trafford brawl of 20 October - only David Seaman declined to join in - cost Arsenal a £50,000 fine and, more significantly, two points. Then, in December, Tony Adams was jailed for nine months - five suspended - for drink driving. Yet Arsenal still won the title by seven points, having along the way established their best start to a season. They lost just once all term.

(1992-93) A DOUBLE OF CUPS

AS Manchester United were ending their 26-year wait for the Championship, Arsenal had the not inconsiderable consolation of winning both domestic cups, defeating Sheffield Wednesday at Wembley twice. The Coca-Cola final was the one that tested Steve Morrow's friendship with Tony Adams. After the young full back's first goal for the club had proved enough to win the day, a delighted Adams boistered Morrow in the air during the post-match celebrations. Only to drop him. Morrow suffered a broken arm, which cost him a return to Wembley for the FA Cup final on 15 May. Arsenal won again, after a replay.

(1993-94) ONE-NIL TO THE ARSENAL

GRAHAM'S first European trophy - and just in the nick of time, as it turned out, given the scandal that was to cost him his job the following season. His team delivered what could be seen as the perfect epitaph to the Graham era: a performance built around resolute defending and one goal, by Alan Smith, to defeat Parma to lift the European Cup-Winners' Cup in Copenhagen.



SPORT

Saturday 16 May 1998

FA Cup final: Bergkamp's absence opens way for fellow striker as Shearer leads Newcastle's bid to deny Arsenal the Double

Wright's chance for final fame

By Glenn Moore
Football Correspondent

IT HAS all the right ingredients. The classic north-south contest, contrasting managers, World Cup hopefuls galore, two clubs gilded with Cup pedigree - one aiming to make history, the other seeking redemption - plus a whiff of controversy and touch of romance. Will this be the year the FA Cup final finally lives up to the hype?

Not since 1991, when Tottenham beat Nottingham Forest in the final of Gazza's wounded knee, has the oldest trophy of them all had a memorable finale. Last year's contest was a Chelsea walkover. The previous one, between Liverpool and Manchester United, a snorathon.

There are reservations. Form suggests Arsenal should win the tie at a stroll, while Newcastle's approach no longer stirs the soul. However, Arsenal may be weakened by the absence of Dennis Bergkamp, whose hamstring injury broke down in training yesterday, while Newcastle still have the potential to both excite and succeed if Kenny Dalglish slips the leash.

He may have to if he wants to redeem a season of soured promise and bitter division with victory. At Highbury last month he sought to stifle Arsenal and hope Alan Shearer could nick a goal. It almost worked as Shearer went close at one end while Arsenal were frustrated at the other.

But then Nicolas Anelka scored just before half-time and the game was over. Having been set up so defensively, Newcastle did not have the firepower to draw level and they lost 3-0.

Keith Gillespie did not play in that match and, while he has been erratic, he does offer Newcastle's best attacking option after Shearer. However, he has not played since being bundled into White Hart Lane's advertising hoardings by Colin Calderwood and, even when fit, does not seem part of Dalglish's plans.

Some of the Scot's team selections have been in line with the Guinness slogan "not everything in black and white makes sense" and today's XI is shrouded in doubt.

The spine - Shay Given, Nikos Dabizas, Stuart Pearce, Rob Lee, David Batty and Alan Shearer - is predictable, but not the flanks. Of these, the most important choice will be the right-

The Cup they won't be fighting for today



The FA Cup trophy that has been hoisted aloft by 71 winning captains this century was on display at Wembley yesterday as dawn broke over the national stadium. However, this trophy will not be seen today. Because it was starting to show

signs of wear, the Cup was replaced by a replica six years ago. The original is now used purely for publicity and promotional purposes. The current version is in fact the fourth FA Cup trophy. The first, much smaller than the present design, was

stolen from the display window of a Birmingham shop in 1895 and the second (a replica of the first) was replaced in 1911 by the trophy that was on display yesterday. The fourth model was first used in 1992.

Photograph: Peter Jay

back who will have the daunting task of tracking Marc Overmars.

Steve Watson and Warren Barton are the most likely candidates, but Dalglish may switch Alessandro Pistone, who has pace and did well when marking Ryan Giggs at Old Trafford, to the right and play Barton or Watson in right midfield.

Bergkamp's injury looks to have given Ian Wright the chance of a glorious end to a difficult season. If the Cup is in a romantic mood he will cement his World Cup place with a leading role this afternoon although, given his lack of match practice, he may struggle to finish the game.

Having won four and drawn one of the six games Bergkamp has missed since November, including the victory over Newcastle, Arsenal will be confident they can win without him. Their biggest worry is the need to regain their momentum.

They have relaxed since clinching the championship, losing heavily at Anfield and 1-0 to a 10-man Aston Villa and it is not always easy to pick up

the pace. However, the team appears both relaxed and determined.

"It is a great day for the club," Martin Keown said, "and

players we must focus on the match not the occasion. Only the winners will be remembered." As potential Double winners this team will be remembered

more than most, but while Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal manager, played down the historical importance of the game, saying that the team had to conce-

trate on the match in isolation, Dalglish was prepared to look further ahead.

"A cup can be a springboard to greater success," he

said. "You think of Mark Robins' goal at Nottingham Forest [which earned Manchester United a third-round victory en route to the 1991 FA Cup triumph that eased the pressure on Alex Ferguson] and Kevin Brock's back-pass at Oxford [which, converted by Adrian Heath, helped Everton's passage to the 1984 League Cup final and probably saved Howard Kendall's job in his first spell at Everton]."

Both clubs went on to win championships and Dalglish, pondering the possibility of emulating them, added: "I can't think of a moment that changed it for us yet, but it is only when you look back you can say: 'That was the turning point.'"

Shearer's goal against Stevenage may thus, one day, hold a similar place in Toon legend as Robins' strike and Brock's error do at Old Trafford and Goodison Park. It would certainly be a better memory of the campaign than either the undignified squabbling with the non-Leaguers, or the later boardroom scandal.

The Toongate Tapes may impinge on today. Newcastle fans will be watching carefully to see if the disgraced former directors, Freddie Shepherd and Douglas Hall, turn up, and many will be angered if, as with the semi-final, Dalglish or Sir John Hall dedicates victory to them.

That aspect may be academic. Special performances from Shearer and Given could tilt the balance, but the odds favour Arsenal. They may have had an uncertain progress, needing penalties to beat Port Vale and West Ham, but they are tighter in defence, better balanced in midfield and, even without Bergkamp, just as potent in attack.

Having lost controversially to Newcastle in 1932, when the ball went out before it was crossed for the winning goal, and heroically in 1957, when depleted by injury, Arsenal should now gain recompense and add the men's FA Cup to the women's on their open-top parade around Islington tomorrow.

Final focus, pages 26-27

Arsenal v Newcastle

probable teams

Manager: Arsène Wenger

Manager: Kenny Dalglish

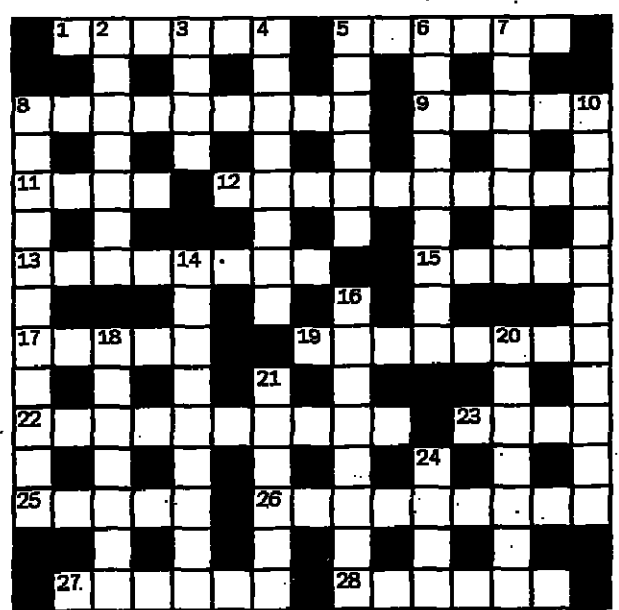
FA Cup final at Wembley (Kick-off 3pm today)

TWELVE
PAGES OF
SPORT
BEGIN ON
PAGE 16

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

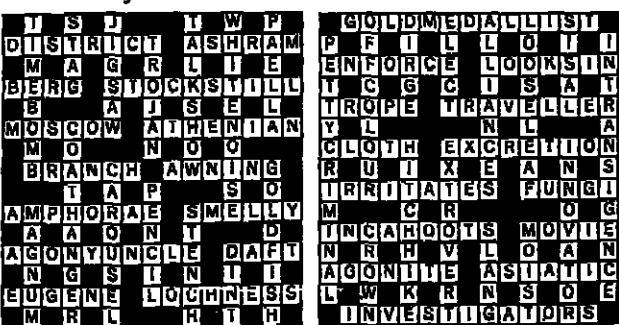
No. 3612, Saturday 16 May

By Spastics



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution



ACROSS

- Island king returns to crown (6)
- She wears ribbons at work (6)
- Advertisement featuring Greek character, inferior writer (9)
- Dog biting end of Miriam's tongue (5)
- A hundred years in prison? (6)
- Slow progress made finding room to store ironmongery (6,4)
- Surprise, surprise - Austria's fashionable (8)
- Question answered by children (5)
- Turn out smartly, only to face a come-down (5)
- About to gain admission to Empire, possibly for first performance (8)
- Participate in trial (10)
- Unsuccessful host is fired (4)
- Vernacular encountered in Latin bar, mostly (5)
- Unwelcome change to our plan where pick-ups involved (9)
- Soldier possessing little English has to translate conversational Japanese (6)
- One with pad expected to produce notes for letter? (6)

DOWN

- Article in Paris that's visible from where we stand? It's a trick! (7)
- A grate that's not secured (4)
- Classical scholar finally putting in time in Italy? (8)
- Excessively quick? After seconds have been lost, more like "lethargic" (7)
- See Pa miss out, unfortunately - should get a K (9)
- Boats are made initially to go in between bridges (7)
- Cards old people receive at last when a student's on holiday, say? (7,4)
- Device for discovering exact position (if what you say is true)? (3,8)
- Given a very bad press, so iron out wrinkles (9)
- Blow large sum of money? That's crazy (8)
- Wide area covered by vessels moored in river (7)
- Organisational level where City man has to cover half of capital (7)
- Trojan queen given address of Our Man in Havana? (6)
- Old prison, easy to get out of (4)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle appeared next Thursday receive handwritten copies of The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, R.O. Box 914, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: G Alderman, Selpers, M Jones, Winchester; B Mackay, Glasgow; D Leach, Newcastle; P Jones, Altringham.

Hasselbaink mark two to join Leeds

By Alan Nixon

GEORGE GRAHAM, the Leeds United manager, has signed the Dutch striker Clyde Wijnhard from Willem II for £2m. The powerful 24-year-old flew in to complete contract talks and have a medical. He will be a new partner for Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink.

Wijnhard was prolific in the Dutch First Division last season with 15 goals for his club, and Graham was impressed with him on spying trips as he scoured Europe. Like Hasselbaink, Wijnhard was born in Surinam and is a similar type who will add strength to the Leeds attack at home and in the UEFA Cup next season.

Manchester United are unlikely to pursue their interest in Argentinian international striker Gabriel Batistuta. It was rumoured United were prepared to spend £11m on the 29-year-old Fiorentina player just over a week after splashing out

£10.7m on the Dutch defender, Jaap Stam.

United's reserve goalkeeper Kevin Pilkington has joined the long-serving Brian McClair as the second squad player on the list of players to be released by Manchester United this summer. The youngsters Stuart Brightwell, David Brown, Ross Millard and Gavin Naylor are others leaving Old Trafford.

United have, however, offered a new contract to the winger Ben Thornley.

McClair is now wanted by Macclesfield Town, but the Second Division club's manager, Sammy McIlroy, has yet to sign a new contract due to a creditors' bill believed to be approaching £500,000.

Since the suicide of their former chairman, Arthur Jones, nearly 18 months ago, the newly-promoted Cheshire club have been locked in complicated legal discussions with the creditors of his bankrupt business. Jansen broadside, page 24

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YOUR MONEY

Personal finance, motoring and property

Saturday 16 May 1998

Bank on getting the best rates

Existing savers often lose out when banks try to woo new custom. Both the Ombudsman and Treasury can help. Paul Slade reports

There is nothing as infuriating as being treated like a second-class citizen. Yet millions of people suffer this fate every year. They are victims of a cynical calculation by the UK's high street institutions that their custom is less important than that of those who have yet to be signed up.

Big banks – and some building societies – offer high rates of interest to pull in new customers because they do not want to lose market share to new competitors such as Sainsbury, Tesco or Safeway – where savings earn 6.5 per cent gross or more from the first £1 onwards, and is always available.

Offering the same high rates to all their existing savers would eat into profits, so older customers are often left in the dark with a far lower interest rate. Moreover, according to leaked internal memos from institutions such as Lloyds TSB and Bradford & Bingley, staff are apparently required not to inform their customers of higher-paying accounts.

The last thing banks and building societies want is for their existing savers to demand the same returns. But if a pledge by Helen Liddell, the Treasury minister, is to be believed, the days of such shabby treatment for existing bank customers may be numbered.

Mrs Liddell announced last week that the Treasury is to conduct an investigation into the way banks operate and threatened to replace the existing system of voluntary regulation with statutory controls.

The MP David Davis, whose views sparked the Treasury inquiry, calls the banks' behaviour "systematic and deliberate".

The Treasury's inquiry

comes as the Consumers' Association mounts its own survey into savings accounts, to be published in the campaign group's monthly magazine *Which?* in the autumn. Neil Winkling, a researcher with the Consumers' Association says: "As soon as a new account is launched with a much better rate, the bank should write to all the customers who may be expected to want to switch over." Instead, the banks rely mostly on posters in branches and ads on pages like these.

If you think your own bank has stranded you in a poorly paying account, get someone there to talk you through the other options available. Make sure you understand the main restrictions applying on each account before you take the plunge.

If you decide to switch, but the bank demands that you pay a penalty before taking the money out of your old account, point out that the Banking Ombudsman may have a dim view of this.

The deputy Banking Ombudsman, Chris Eadie, says: "If we think a bank has been unfair in the way it has handled a lock-in to a particular interest rate, then we will decide against the bank – and there have been cases where we have done that."

It is the Ombudsman's job to resolve disputes when the bank and the customer reach deadlock. The Ombudsman received 8,818 complaints in the year to 30 September, 1997. About half of the 674 cases

which went on to a full investigation were resolved in favour of the customer.

It would be useful to know just which banks he has found wanting, so we could all avoid them, but this is information the Ombudsman refuses to provide.

Mr Eadie says: "I think it might seem unfair for a bank to get caught out for one particular bad thing when they might be providing quite a good service to customers in other ways." Mr Eadie says his office has already received "a

very considerable number of complaints" against Northern Rock, which angered savers at the end of last month.

The bank has collapsed its postal range from 11 accounts to just three. This left many savers with a lower interest rate than they had been receiving before, albeit with a shorter notice period to match. The changes took effect on 23 April.

Ironically, Northern Rock did write to individual savers to notify them of the changes. But many of the letters, posted on

17 April, had still not arrived when the changes came in, leaving angry accountholders to read about their new accounts in the press.

Northern Rock's spokesman Ron Stout says: "That clearly wasn't our intention. That's an area that we do regret, and we'll look into that."

Northern Rock savers who do not like the new rates, and want to take their money elsewhere, will have to serve the account's notice period or sacrifice up to 60 days' interest.



INDEX

Mutual targets

Mutual ownership of building societies, already under attack from carpetbaggers and assorted former buders, this week received a further knock as a company was formally launched to take over smaller institutions.

Murray Financial Corporation intends to target societies with assets between £100m and £2.5bn following its flotation on the Alternative Investment Market. The offer of subscription will be open only to share and warrant holders in the existing Cairngorms Building Societies Investment Trust.

Meanwhile, Nationwide Building Society is steeled itself for the ballot on proposals for its demutualisation, led by Michael Hardern, a former buder. The society is expected to announce a substantial increase in the existing £200m annual "loyalty" benefits paid to its members just as ballot forms go out.

Artistic totems

Anthropologists won't like it, but examples of African and other Third World utensils, weapons and textiles are now being treated as art – and, as John Windsor reports on page 3, they are fetching vast sums.

Reaching peaks

Will share prices always march resolutely skywards? Jonathan Davis suggests, on page 5, that while shares have done well over long historical periods, their outperformance over some periods may mean they will underperform in others.

Liberal living

Finding the right place to live is never a straightforward matter. For many gay people, it may also involve living where your sexual orientation is not not simply tolerated but welcomed. Robert Liebman discusses the issues and looks out for the right locations on page 11.

New ways to perform the same old tricks against customers

A change to the Banking Code last year barred one bank trick but left the way open to another.

Once, the banks would simply close an obsolete account to new business, leaving the savers already in that account to languish there. Since last July, however, the code has insisted that customers in these discontinued accounts are sent annual notice of the bank's other accounts and the (generally higher) interest they pay. But this clause applies only to accounts which are "no longer available to customers".

The idea was that savers in the discontinued accounts could then see that they would get a far better return elsewhere, and be able to change their account accordingly.

But the banks have already found a way round this. Now they leave the old accounts open. No one in their right mind would start such an uncompetitive account but – technically – they are still available to customers.

At the Consumers' Association, Neil Winkling says: "What tends to happen now is that the banks don't

actually discontinue their old accounts – so that provision in the banking code doesn't apply.

"Say they're launching one of those new instant-access accounts that has limited withdrawals, but pays a much better rate of interest than the old instant-access account. There's no requirement for them to write to existing customers to tell them.

"That suits the banks because they don't have to pay the higher rate to all their existing customers."

Other scams operated by banks and

building societies include hiding onerous conditions linked to apparently generous accounts in the small print.

In other cases, the product appears designed to catch savers out, such as Abbey National's postal account. This pays a bonus each quarter – but linked to the smallest amount in the account.

So, if the account held £25,000 for most of the quarter but dipped to £25 for one day, the bonus paid is on that smaller amount.

Penalty points for loyalty

A leading financial information group is accusing mortgage lenders of deliberately penalising their existing borrowers in order to attract new customers.

MoneyFacts, a highly respected provider of mortgage and savings statistics, says offers from lenders to new borrowers are generally far better than to their older ones.

"Products available for 'switching' – existing borrowers not moving house or lender but who wish to remain with the same lender – are usually offered somewhat under concession, and rates are not usually as competitive as those on offer to a new borrower who has never been with that lender before," says Vicky Burn, mortgage editor at *MoneyFacts*.

She gives the example of Halifax, where a typical discounted variable rate for new borrowers is 6.95 per cent until the end of August 2003. Yet, while this rate is also available

for people who want to switch to Halifax, it is denied to the neo-bank's existing borrowers.

"This does seem to indicate that lenders are deliberately using long-established loyal borrowers to subsidise the much lower rates they think they have to offer to get new business," Ms Burn adds.

Research from *MoneyFacts* shows that, until eight or nine years ago, fixed mortgages were virtually unheard of. Even in 1991, only 23 out of about 100 lenders offered fixed rates. Within a year, almost half did.

The property recession forced lenders to introduce incentives to attract custom. Discounted mortgages were the first, followed by cashback mortgages. At first, these were offered only to people moving house but are now available to anyone wishing to remortgage.

In turn, this means swapping lenders has become the logical way to get a better deal, increas-

ing the need to penalise existing borrowers to entice new ones.

Ms Burn points out that few lenders actively try to encourage loyalty from existing borrowers. Just 12 offer preferential rates if customers have been with the lender for more than five years. Of those, all are building societies bar Northern Rock.

But she adds: "Most of these loyalty schemes still compare badly with the rates some new borrowers are being offered."

Among lenders with loyalty packages is Coventry BS, which offers a variable rate of 7.95 per cent to those who have been with the society more than 61 months. Bradford & Bingley offers a variable rate of 8.25 per cent if borrowers have been with it for two years or more, while Britannia pays a cash bonus, depending on the size of the loan and the number of years they have been with the society.

– Nic Ciciuti
Mortgage survey, pages 6, 7

Abbey needs to clean up its act

Doing the housekeeping may mean one thing to most of us, but to Abbey National it clearly has a completely different meaning.

To the Abbey, a "housekeeping measure" was the term given this week to a cut of up to 0.3 per cent in the rates paid on some of its savings accounts.

The bank justified the move by arguing that interest rates are falling – although there was no evidence of this as far as variable mortgage rates are concerned: Abbey National is keeping them firmly at their current 8.7 per cent level.

Meanwhile, savers who want that little bit extra interest could do worse than take a look at Save & Prosper's opportunistic launch of a Fast-Track ISA, a reference to the Individual Savings Account which is being introduced in April 1999.

Save & Prosper's account will pay 6 per cent gross on lump-sum investments of £3,000 or £4,000, or 7.2 per cent gross on sums between £5,000 and £7,000 – in £1,000 multiples.

If investors transfer their money into an equivalent Save & Prosper ISA in April 1999 they will receive an extra bonus of 1.8 per cent on the sum invested, equal to about 9 per cent gross in total. S&P says it will not impose any hidden catches or exit penalties on its ISA, which is a 30-day notice account.

This means that should the account's rates not be competitive after April next year, savers could simply give 30 days' notice, close it and walk away with the equivalent of 9 per cent interest on their initial deposit. Now, that's what I call good housekeeping.

– Nic Ciciuti

Thought for the day

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Tricks of the trade to test advisers

NIC CICUTTI

Almost exactly 12 months ago, together with the investigative TV series *World in Action*, this newspaper commissioned research on the way personal pensions are sold.

One of the ways *World in Action* chose to illustrate the point that many salespeople are giving poor advice to their clients was to film a "mystery shopper" with a hypothetical problem. A range of insurance company salesmen were then asked to deal with it. In many cases, the advice given was commission-driven and positively dangerous to that fictional person's financial health.

World in Action's "mystery shopper" helped expose some pretty bad practices among salespeople. The usefulness of this approach is apparently gaining new converts: the trade magazine *Financial Adviser* reports that the Personal Investment Authority (PIA), the financial services watchdog, has held secret trials where "mystery shoppers" ring advisers up and tape the answers given to a fictional problem put to them.

Apparently, independent financial advisers (IFAs) are up in arms about these secret tape-recordings, claiming they are a serious infringement of civil liberties and a serious waste of IFAs' time and money.

As someone who has been both the victim and the author of a few telephone-based pranks in my time, I have some gut sympathy with the IFAs. Yet I can't help feeling that they miss the point.

At present, the main way of checking up on whether an IFA is doing a good job is to have random inspec-

tions of their paperwork. This is in addition to tight controls over what the adviser is allowed and not allowed to do at any time. Despite all these checks, there are many cases where the quality of advice given to clients remains extremely poor. In some cases, the adviser is at the very limits of what might reasonably be described as fraudulent activity.

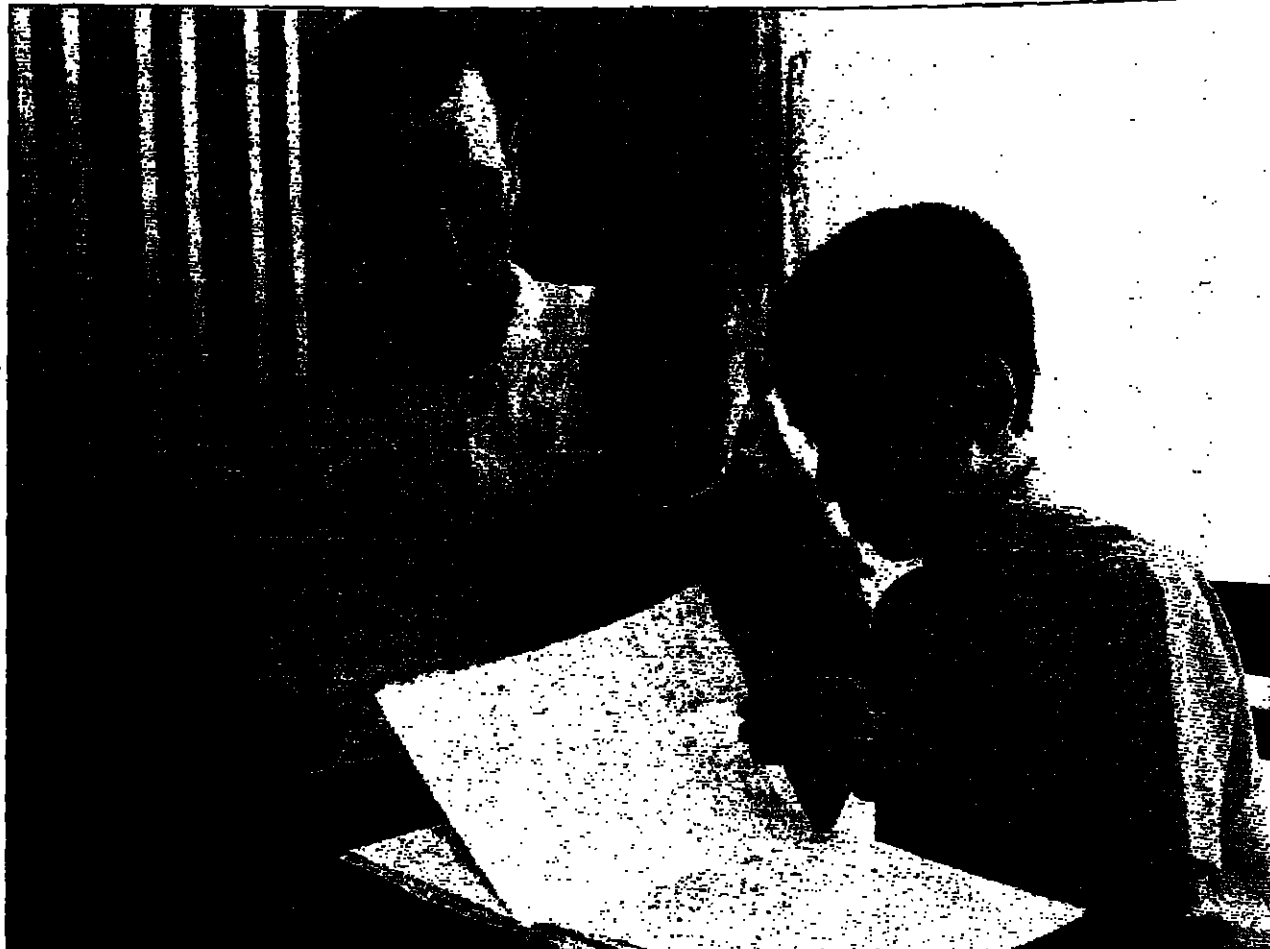
Now that IFAs know their records may be subject to checks, some have become even more adept at verbal flim-flam, their nudges, winks and omissions as significant as any written advice they impart to their clients. The only way to ensure that they are up to scratch is to test them face-to-face. Moreover, to prevent any dispute as to what was said, they should be taped and that tape used in evidence if necessary.

No doubt some advisers will complain that their extremely costly time should not be wasted by fake clients who don't end up as customers. That's fine by me: as a regulator, I would happily shell out a few hundred quid to an adviser that a "mystery shopper" found to be above reproach—as long as they are prepared to pay an equally large penalty if they are not.

Somewhat, I have a feeling it's the regulator that would be quick in. In a new story just days after its initial report about "IFA fury over mystery shoppers", *Financial Adviser* reported this week that in an exercise carried out by Suffolk trading standards department, one third of the 27 IFAs visited by its officers were breaking key PIA rules. Oh dear: time for the hidden tape recorders, methinks.

How to cover all possible get-out clauses

Just because it's your word against that of a salesman, the regulator will not always side with big insurers, reports Rachel Fixsen



When David Lenane's wife died, he thought their insurance would cover the mortgage while he looked after their children. Now he's having to fight to hold on to their home
Photograph: Keith Dobney

Losing your wife is one of the most terrible experiences that can happen to someone. Being left to bring up two small children on your own makes things harder. But imagine then finding out you might lose the family home because your wife's life was not insured as you had always thought.

This is exactly what happened to David Lenane, a 25-year-old, self-employed electrician. His wife, Anne, died in January. At least both he and his wife had life insurance designed to pay off the mortgage if either of them died. Mr Lenane thought. The couple had taken out various life policies with Refuge Assurance through one of their door-to-door salesmen.

But, to his horror, in February Mr Lenane found out that his wife's insurance would only pay out around £11,000—nowhere near enough to pay off the £50,000 owed to Woolwich Building Society on the couple's three-bedroom home in Hemel Hempstead.

Money is tight. Since his wife's death, Mr Lenane says he has been unable to work regularly because of the demands of looking after the children and fitting in with school hours. "I'm on income support and for every week I'm off work, I use £100-£150 of my savings," he says.

He complained to the insurance company, which has now been taken over by United Friendly. On close inspection, the various insurance documents held by Mr Lenane did show that the life insurance part of the endowment policy taken out to repay

the mortgage sum borrowed was—very unusually—only a single life policy to pay out if he died. Mrs Lenane did have two other life insurance policies with the same provider, but they only paid out a total of £10,984.

"We both believed we had adequate life cover to pay off the house," says Mr Lenane. He

freely admits neither he nor his wife were financial experts, and says they simply believed what the Refuge salesman told them about the cover they were buying.

United Friendly says the Lenanes' application for a joint life policy was turned down due to Mrs Lenane's ill health. It also says it has documents

signed by Mr Lenane which confirm that he agreed to take out a single life cover.

But Mr Lenane disputes this, saying he has no knowledge of any application being turned down. And although his wife's health was not particularly good at the time the insurance was taken out, she was not suffering from anything

which appeared to be life-threatening, he says.

The complaint seems likely to be taken to the PIA (Personal Investment Authority) Ombudsman—the industry's watchdog—if United Friendly cannot settle the matter with Mr Lenane. The company indicated this week that it did not accept Mr Lenane's version of events and is not therefore prepared to settle.

What happens when it's just your word against that of an insurance company or financial services provider? Are you really expected to have read and understood all the small print of a life insurance policy you buy? Can you afford to rely on verbal information given by the salesman?

"We don't rule in favour of the company just because they say 'A'," says Tony Holland, the PIA Ombudsman. "A case depends on many things, including what other evidence the person making the complaint has and whether there was a full fact find conducted by the salesperson," he says.

Mr Holland says it is too early for him to comment on the Lenane case. But he says in general, insurance documents can be very unclear and hard for many people to understand.

Documentation in a disputed claim may show that a customer agreed to a certain condition of an insurance policy. But this does not automatically mean the Ombudsman will rule in the company's favour, he says.

"If it's a health point, then the customer must disclose it... on the other hand if it's a small complex point—for instance whether a policy is joint or single life—this is often a red herring," says Mr Holland.

Any couple with children taking out a mortgage would usually be advised to buy joint life cover to the level of the mortgage. United Friendly says it often recommends joint life policies in these cases to provide financial protection for the children.

But, all too often, people who believe they have joint life policies in fact turn out only to be covered for a single life. Mr Holland says. If this only comes to light when a spouse has died, an emotional crisis becomes compounded by a financial disaster.

We apologise for the fact that this week's Money Makeover has had to be postponed. If you would like to take part in one yourself, please write to Andrew Verity, Free Financial Makeover, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London, E14 3DL. You must be prepared for your name and picture to appear in these pages.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

When dealing with insurance, remember:

■ Using an insurance broker or independent financial adviser could help you avoid buying inappropriate insurance cover.

■ Make sure any insurer you deal with is a member of the Association of British Insurers. The ABI has a code of conduct which ensures claims are dealt with promptly and fairly.

■ Buy from insurers which belong to the insurance

ombudsman scheme (or PIA ombudsman scheme for life insurance).

■ In your application for insurance, make sure you are as truthful as possible. Even if not specifically asked, play safe and mention anything which you consider relevant to the matter. Failing to disclose a minor detail could jeopardise any claim.

■ Bite the bullet and read insurance documents through. Ask for clarification on anything you don't understand. Or ask an insurance broker or

financial adviser to read them for you.

■ If a claim is refused, complain to the insurance company. If you are still not satisfied, take your grievance to the relevant ombudsman. If the insurance provider does not belong to the ombudsman scheme, the matter may have to be resolved in court. Consult a solicitor.

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AND IF YOUR MIND clings shut at the mere mention of the word million, consider this: if you add up your lifetime earnings—past and future—you will see that you will almost certainly earn a fortune in your lifetime. It could add up to a million pounds—or more.

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Maybe you think you should entrust your money to an expert. If you do, you may be disappointed. The shocking truth is many professional fund managers are not much good at what they do. Most of them do more poorly than the Stockmarket as a whole. The only certainty about letting others manage your money is that you'll let them help themselves to a chunk of it through their fees.

IN FACT the widely-accepted Random Walk theory says that you will beat the pros at picking shares by simply blundering yourself and sticking a pin in the share table in your newspaper.

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What about seeking advice from a financial adviser—someone who'll give you sound and impartial advice on what best to do with your hard-earned money. Well, you're going to have to look quite hard.

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So what about those who are allowed to call themselves independent financial advisers? Consider this fact: most IFAs earn their living from commission from the products they sell. Yet some of the best investments are run by firms which pay no commission. How likely do you think it is they'll be on your IFAs' shortlist of recommended investments if there's a commission-paying firm offering a remarkably similar product?

But... let's face it... most people find today's world of personal finances too

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complicated—and too baffling. In short, they're stuck. They are successful in many other respects. But when it comes to investing and money management they have no real plan. All because there's been no simple way to get started. That is, until now...

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Always everything is spelled out step-by-step, like a simple recipe. So you take just those steps that are right for your own circumstances.

BEAR IN MIND TOO, that the publisher of SPI, Independent Research Services Ltd, is not linked in any way to any vested interests. It is not connected with any Stockbroker or Insurance Agency or Unit Trust or the like—and it has no commissioned Salesmen or Agents. So you can be absolutely sure that what you learn will be for no one's benefit but yours.

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True, money isn't everything. But it does help. SPI shows you how to start on the way towards having that million—and being able to tell yourself that you're a "millionaire". So, before your mind clings shut over that word again... why not at least take the opportunity to see for yourself? You can now get to look over the first two lessons with no obligation for 10 days just by posting the coupon below. And whatever you decide, Lesson 1 is yours to keep—FREE!

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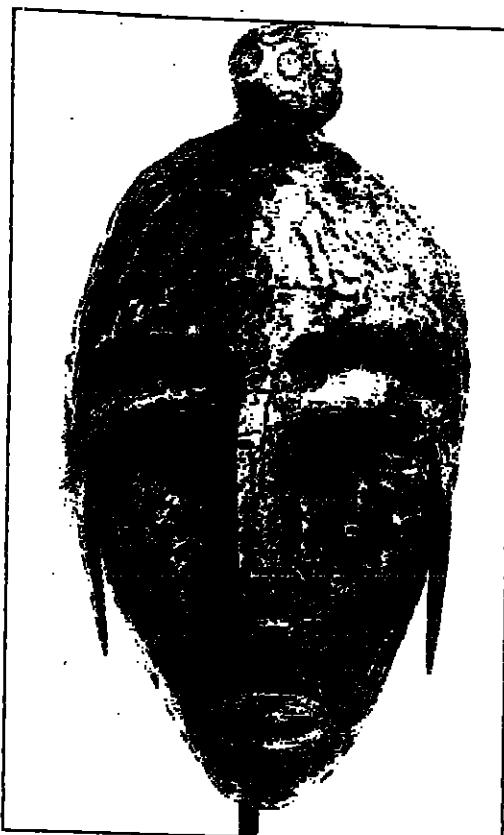
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This Marka mask from Mali (left) is worth £1,400, while the Makonde Virgin Mary is valued at £700

Tribal values

Collect to Invest: Under Western eyes, and carefully placed spotlights, a shield becomes high art. Ignore anthropologists' objections and buy, advises John Windsor

You do not have to be an anthropologist to invest in tribal art. Being a Western aesthete will do. Until recently, only carved wooden sculpture – face masks and figures of people and animals – fetched fine art prices in the salerooms. The rest – weapons, domestic utensils, textiles, bead jewellery – were rated not as art but as anthropological specimens.

Now, home makers and interior decorators seeking simple, sensational objects to display in sparsely furnished loft spaces have broadened the market. Install a plinth, apply a spotlight, and a decorated tribal shield becomes art.

Buyers at next month's tribal art auctions and Tribal Art Fair in London would do well to study prices realised at the most recent auctions for examples of the rising value of anthropology. At Bonhams in December, an Australian Aboriginal stone *ichuringa* a little over 7ins high – a ritual object traditionally hidden out of sight of women – fetched a whopping £2,990, nearly four times its pre-

sale estimate. Five years previously it had fetched a mere £150 at a Phillips auction.

The reason for the price jump? It was incised on both sides with a network of parallel lines linked with concentric circular medallions. To an Aborigine, it tells of the mythic "dream time". In Western eyes, that's art. The prices of Aboriginal bark paintings bearing comparable designs are going through the roof at Sotheby's annual June sales of Aboriginal art in Melbourne.

The powerful but seemingly paradoxical allure that tribal art (still sometimes described as "primitive" art) exerts in our advanced post-Renaissance culture is explained by two examples from art history, one recent, the other occurring in 1907.

In that year, Picasso first clapped eyes on African carvings in the Palais du Trocadéro's ethnographic museum. He was transfixed, and his art transformed. The immediate result was that his five nude female figures, *Les Femmes d'Alger*, then in progress, convulsed into

hard-angled shapes with heads like African masks.

For 30 years, the canny Picasso refused to acknowledge his artistic debt. "African art? Never heard of it!" he would say. But when the secret came out, prices of tribal masks and figures began to rise.

Anthropological specimens in general did not truly enter the Western art market until the Royal Academy's blockbuster exhibition *Africa: The Art of a Continent* in 1995-96 – curated by an artist, Tom Phillips. The exhibition outraged anthropologists. Here were tribal artefacts from Western private collections that had been torn from their archaeological context and were now being hailed as art by Western aesthetes. Phillips retorted impishly that the Venus de Milo had been torn from context, too. "The test of art," he said, "is whether it can survive independently of context."

The biggest controversy centred on the exhibition's carved five-seated stool from the Ngombe area of Zaire, which was pegged into its stand vertically, instead of horizontally, as if it was an abstract sculpture. One scholar fumed: "Duchamp has gone to Africa." But the die was cast. The exhibition stitched art irrevocably into "tribal art".

That five-seater still stands provocatively upright in the home of its owner, the London tribal art dealer Peter Adler, son of the harmonica player. Customers buy his earth-coloured geometrically patterned Shocwa raffa cloths from Zaire (£250-£600) and big Fante flags from Ghana (£400-£2,200) in order to frame and hang in sitting rooms in Islington and loft spaces in Farringdon. Senoufo beds from Upper Volta, long planks of wood with headboards (£1,000-£3,000), serve as coffee tables.

All of Adler's stock is old, that is, pre-1950. It has come from reputable Western collections. He never buys from Africa. Authenticity is all-

important in this market, which, with the advent of tourism, is bedevilled by contemporary batch-produced "airport art".

Objects that have actually been used in tribal rituals, such as fertility rites, carry an added cachet. Perhaps Picasso was right when he said that his experience in the Trocadéro had taught him that art is "a form of magic".

An unwanted Western look makes Makonde masks from Tanzania and Mozambique hard to sell. They have an eerie realism. Some are of the Virgin Mary – evidence of Catholic Portuguese colonial influence. Fiona McKinnon, tribal art dealer and organiser of the Tribal Art Fair, finds it easier to sell fierce-looking Marka masks from Mali. This one, covered in hammered brass strips, is £1,400. The Makonde Virgin is £700.

Australian aboriginal art is rising fastest in price – estimates for two carved shields, £800-£1,000 each in Bonhams' forthcoming sale, are modest – they are likely to be fought over. South African (notably Zulu) and native American prices are being pushed up by guilt-ridden native whites. Polynesian prices are as strong as ever.

The Eurostar rail link is bringing more Belgian and French day-trip bidders in search of former colonial tribal artefacts – Congolese, for example. Look for bargains among neck rests, stools, shields and weapons with finely carved, unusual designs and a patina from handling. Use your Western eyes. They're the only ones you've got.

Bonhams Tribal and Pre-Columbian Art sale: 3 June, 2pm (inquiries: 0171-393 3900).
Phillips Tribal Art and Antiquities: 25 June, 11am (inquiries: 0171-629 6602).
Tribal Art Fair: Elms Lesters Painting Rooms, Filcroft Street, Soho, London WC2H 8DH, 7 and 8 June, 11am-6pm (inquiries: 0171-836 6747).
Peter Adler: 0171-262 1775

INTERNET INVESTOR



ROBIN AMLÖT

Get ready to shop till you drop off in front of your PC screen...

It would be unfair to say the anoraks were out in force at the Internet World 98 exhibition over the last few days. For one, thing it has been far too hot to wear an anorak.

Indeed, technology for the sake of technology appeared to take a back seat at the exhibition, with a much greater focus on, in particular, software developments aimed at boosting e-commerce in all its forms, business-to-business and business-to-consumer.

This was not a show for the consumer. It was aimed at people in the internet business, or those wanting to be in the internet business.

However, anybody who does not believe that, within the next decade, they are likely to be monitoring their bank account, ordering their shopping, booking their holiday and buying their insurance and cinema tickets

over the internet would have had their certainties shaken up.

A survey by Datamonitor on behalf of the show's sponsors, Mecklermedia, forecasts 100 per cent growth per annum in consumer use of the internet in the UK over the next five years.

By 2002, individual consumers will be responsible for generating 65 per cent of UK internet services turnover, a market which is likely to be worth a total of £2bn. Within that figure, on-line shopping is expected to grow from £6.7m in 1997 to more than £600m by 2002.

Several stands at the exhibition were displaying software designed to allow secure payments over the world wide web. Among them, NetBank is a privately owned company which offers secure, on-line card clearance facilities. It currently

has the capability to process Visa and Mastercard credit cards, plus American Express, Diners Club, Eurocard, JCB, Switch, Delta and all Visa-affiliated debit cards.

You can check out exactly how the company's products work on its website but be sure you spell the name correctly – netbank with an "n". If you type in "netbank" with a "k" you will find yourself on the website of a bank in Atlanta, Georgia.

The internet may have created a global market but the world does not have a global currency. Yet, Well, actually it does. WorldPay's multi-currency micro-payment system allows low-value purchases to be made in the lowest denomination of more than 100 currencies. Payments are secured using a WorldPay Smartcard.

The first on-line shop to use WorldPay's secure transactions software opened in 1994. Barclays Bank's e-shopping mall, BarclaySquare, was developed in conjunction with WorldPay.

Furthermore, presumably on the principle of "if you can't beat them, join them", banknote printer De La Rue signed a global marketing and development deal with WorldPay last year.

Other companies were also offering secure software to allow on-line transactions

but the actual transaction is only part of the story. Underlining the future importance of electronic commerce was news at Internet World 98 that both Microsoft and Intel, the twin giants of personal computing, were signing up development partners.

Intel is partnering German firm Intershop Communications while the UK-based internet trading specialist, Triptych Systems, is working with Microsoft.

Even older-established names in the communications business are leaping on the e-commerce bandwagon. Cable & Wireless has launched an e-commerce service licensed from US group Open Market.

Among its first customers is Oxford University Press, with one of the most comprehensive ranges of academic books in the world.

Perhaps of more immediate use to the general consumer is Yell, the website of Yellow Pages. You can probably work out what this offers. However, in addition to the more traditional directory function, the site is developing "transactional sites" to allow small businesses to offer us their products on the web.

Netbank: www.netbank.com
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Shares are still the best investment for long-term returns, but you could be looking at a very long term if you invest at the top of a bull market

How shares have performed (1802-1996)

Holding period	% of times shares outperformed bonds	Outperformance
1 year	60.5	61.5
2 years	84.9	85.5
5 years	70.2	73.3
10 years	79.6	79.8
20 years	91.5	94.3
30 years	99.4	97.4

Source: Stocks for The Long Run (McGraw-Hill 1996)

Are you feeling confident about the stock market? When shares are riding high, the rising value of their portfolios gives most investors a warm feeling inside. Yet it is one of the paradoxes of the stock market that feeling good about the market is actually the time you should be worrying most.

So much, at least, I learnt from my recent trip to the United States, when I had the chance to catch up with the

latest research by Jeremy Siegel of Wharton University.

If anyone can lay claim to being the person who has provided the intellectual rationale for the recent strength of world stock markets, then Professor Siegel is that man. His immaculately researched historical analysis of stock market trends, first published in 1994, established how remarkably consistent long-term stock market returns have been.

Tracing the data back to the start of the 19th century, Professor Siegel established what smart investors knew intuitively: that while shares are highly volatile in the short term, over longer periods their real rates of return are more certain than alternatives such as bonds.

"Despite extraordinary changes in the economic, social and political environment over the past two centuries," he concludes (and don't

forget this period includes two World Wars, not to mention the Great Depression and the Opec crisis of the 1970s) "stocks have yielded between 6.6 and 7.2 per cent per year after inflation in all major sub-periods". What is more, the long-run real returns on shares in the UK and Germany (6.2 and 6.6 per cent per annum respectively) have been very similar - both being within 1.0 per cent of the US average.

Stocks are also more certain to provide real returns over time than either bonds or cash, the two main alternatives. Hold a portfolio of shares for 17 years, and there has never been a period when they have not provided a real return. In other words, unlike bonds or cash, stocks are in practice index-linked.

Of course, it does all depend what you mean by long term. Professor Siegel has cranked the numbers. What they show is summarised in the table. The trend is clear: the longer you hold shares, the greater the chance that your investment will outperform a similar investment in either bonds or cash (defined here as Treasury bills). In round number

terms, there is a 60 per cent chance that stocks will outperform bonds over one year. This rises to roughly 70 per cent after five years, 80 per cent after 10 years, 90 per cent after 20 years - and, in effect, 100 per cent after 30 years. The figures for cash are of a similar order of magnitude.

The conclusion, says the professor, is that shares are "clearly the asset of choice for all investors seeking long-term growth". Well, amen to that, but he doesn't stop there.

There is, he goes on, "no compelling reason" for long-term investors to cut their holdings of shares "no matter how high the market seems". So, as long as you hang on long enough, you will always come out ahead. Even those who bought the so-called Nifty Fifty at the very top of the 1972 market, when fashionable growth stocks such as Merck and Xerox were selling for an average of 41-times earnings, would have made a healthy 12 per cent real return if they had held on to them through the great bear market of the 1970s.

Mind you, they would have had to have waited until the middle

1990s to catch up with the market as a whole but, even so, the patient investor who ignored the level of the market in 1972 would not have lost money as a result.

But can the professor really be saying that it is never right to sell shares, or that it can be justifiable to buy shares when the market, as now, is more highly valued than it has ever been on conventional criteria?

He himself admits in the latest edition of his book that he was worried by the example of a distinguished academic predecessor, Professor Irving Fisher, who famously predicted in October 1929 that "stocks are on a permanently high plateau". Just two weeks later, Wall Street crashed and we entered the worst bear market of the century.

Nevertheless, Professor Siegel is sticking to his view that shares have actually been "chronically undervalued" for most of history, with investors blinded to their real long-term value by the evident short-term volatility of the markets. It is the very fact that people are now wishing up to the long-term value of shares, coupled with unprecedented

edly favourable recent economic conditions, which helps to explain the depth and strength of the current bull market in the professor's view.

But can it last? At the end of the day, Professor Siegel concedes, markets are made by humans rather than by facts, however impressively documented. If investors come to believe the rates of return achieved in the last 15 years are in fact the norm, rather than nearly double the long-run average, then they will be disappointed when normality finally returns.

He quotes evidence which shows how periods of positive investor sentiment are usually followed by periods of market underperformance, and vice versa - the gloomier you are, the better the chances are that shares will do well in the immediate future.

"Fear", says the professor "has a far greater grasp on human action than does the impressive weighting of historical evidence." At the moment, of course, the feelgood factor is still very much with us and bargain hunters in the stock market are on short rations.

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MONEY & ETHICS

Can morals make a return?

In the second of his series on ethical funds, Iain Morse looks at how screening out stocks can affect a portfolio's profits

Anyone choosing to invest into an ethical fund makes a moral decision to avoid some business activities and perhaps support others - but also wants a return on their investment. The question for fund managers is how to deliver those returns while still maintaining an ethical stance.

This isn't always an easy task, given the different definitions of what is ethical and what is not. Despite a common label, ethical funds can differ widely, both in terms of which shares they will or will not hold and in how they see their relationship with companies they invest into.

Investing ethically can also involve other dilemmas. Running a truly "clean" fund is nigh-on impossible, while the use of positive and negative share selection criteria imposes limitations on fund managers.

Part of the problem hinges on the size of companies whose shares are acceptable to ethical funds. Elaine Morgan, ethical fund manager at Scottish Equitable, one provider, explains: "There's little commonality to all the available funds." But she adds: "Some themes emerge, [such as] a tendency to be overweight in small companies, or avoidance of traditional heavy industries."

The key issue is how far ethical selection criteria distorts the "universe" of possible share holdings in a fund against a model portfolio based on the UK stock market.

Take the FTSE 100 share index, covering the 100 largest traded companies. Each has a market capitalisation of at least £1bn, and together they account for 70 per cent of the UK stock market by value. The next 250 companies, measured by the Mid-Cap Index, account for about 25 per cent of the stock market.

In theory, a model investment portfolio would contain around 70 per cent of its value in the top 100 shares. However, by their nature, large companies are diversified across a very wide range of activities, many with wholly or partly owned foreign subsidiaries, some in joint ventures with other companies, and foreign governments. This means that many large companies will fail one or more negative criteria adopted by ethical fund managers.

There is also the question of risk. From an investor's point of view, risk is as much about short-term fluctuations in value as long-term fund performance relative to a benchmark like the FTSE AllShare index. As a rule, small company shares are more volatile than those of the top 100.

When selecting an ethical fund, its use of screening and investment philosophy will tell you where it stands on the risk spectrum.

At one end of the scale is the fund applying a full range

of negative screens on companies, and then selecting only those companies which satisfy further positive criteria. One run in this way might select no more than 20 per cent of FTSE 100 shares, and will have a high exposure to small company shares.

Centre of the scale are funds applying a limited set of negative screens, but pragmatic in their approach to particular companies. If management gives a positive response to criticism, or are "best in their class", their shares can be included in the portfolio.

This approach, taken by both Friends Provident and NPI, allows about 40 per cent of the FTSE 100 share index to form part of their portfolios, with a consequent reduction in risk. About half of each company's funds consists of FTSE 100 shares.

At the other end of the scale are funds with minimal negative screening, but which talk to companies on a range of issues - pollution is a favourite - trying to encourage them to change their ways. At this end, as much as 80 to 90 per cent of a fund's value may be in large companies.

One way to measure fund risk is by their volatility, or the extent to which their returns vary month on month over a number of years. The greater the volatility, the riskier the fund.

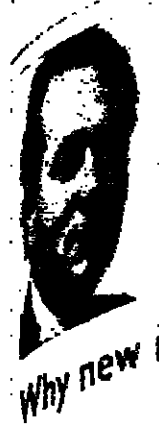
Jeff Saunders, chief investment manager at Standard Life, believes: "By their nature, ethical funds must be more volatile than mainstream UK equity funds. I'd compare our fund to the UK small companies sector."

"Consensus expectations of change on matters like pollution regulation are already factored into the market. We use screening which separates shares into three groups: unacceptable, acceptable, and preferred." Standard Life, like many other fund managers, uses screening provided by the Ethical Investment Research Service (Eiris).

Some companies go further. Anne-Maree O'Connor, head research analyst at NPI, says: "Negative screening does nothing to promote real change. It's a thing of the past. The point now is to influence management."

NPI does all its research in-house, she adds. "It's easy to launch a new ethical fund, using one or two negative screens, and use this as a marketing ploy. But we try to use our influence more deeply, taking a holistic view of companies we invest into."

"The Independent" has produced a free 28-page "Guide to Ethical Finance", written by Nic Clewitt, the paper's personal finance editor, and sponsored by Friends Provident. Call 0800 214487 or fill in the coupon on page 3.



The Stern Tax-f

ملف من الاصل



BRIAN
TORA

Why new issues take off

It seems you cannot win in this business. By any stretch of the imagination, the flotation of Thomson Travel was a raging success. Yet much of the focus of attention last Monday, when dealings commenced, was on the administrative muddles that dogged the allocation of shares to private investors who had endeavoured to support the issue.

If ever a company was a victim of its own success, Thomson Travel was. More than a million people registered for shares. It was, by all accounts, the most popular share issue since Rail Track.

But wait a second. Just how many share issues have there been since Rail Track? If you exclude the demutualisations, none of any size. And here we have the problem: a dearth of new issues. So, when one comes along with a well-known name, offering obvious attractions such as discounts on holidays, it is hardly surprising if the punters line up in droves.

At present, there is not much sign of more flotation activity. If anything, the trend is the other way. Mergers among motor manufacturers, talk of telecoms giants tying together, there is plenty going on in the world of bids and deals.

And then you have the share buy-backs. With the ending of any ability to reclaim tax on dividends paid on ordinary shares for all investors fairly soon, it was inevitable that the companies would choose this method of rewarding shareholders.

We do not have the range of large, privately owned companies that exists in continental Europe to provide a ready market for flotation. Of course, that may change - at least so far as our neighbours across the English Channel are concerned. A growing appetite for equity issues in Europe could stimulate a rush of flotations.

Privatising state-owned industries will start the ball rolling, but it could be that there will be enough of a cultural shift to tempt entrepreneurs to float their companies, particularly if valuation levels remain as high as they are.

Over here, the potential for new issues is more limited. Most state enterprises not firmly nailed to the public sector have been sold off, while the demutualisation bandwagon may not have much further to run. Anyway, demutualisations simply convert reserves into shares. Unless new money is raised (which does not seem very likely), shares are not offered to potential new investors to pay good money for.

We do, of course, have the tea company Tetley coming along soon. It is a well-known name, although hardly as sexy as Thomson Travel. Moreover, there will be those who remember that Tetley was itself bought out from Allied Domecq not very long ago at less than half the value likely to be attributed to it on the stock market.

Of course, the success of Thomson Travel could coax other flotations into the market place. Virgin Travel has been widely tipped as one. It would be quite a turnaround for Richard Branson.

His flirtation with the stock market, through his music business, was hardly a happy experience. Still, he has indicated that Virgin Rail, at least, may enter the public domain. Whether it will have quite the appeal of Thomson Travel if, indeed, we are offered shares, only time will tell. But Virgin must now be one of the most powerful brands in the world. Expect a rush to buy.

Brian Tora is chairman of the Greig Middleton investment strategy committee

BEST BORROWING RATES

Telephone	Account	Interest rate	Deposit	Rate	Interest rate
MORTGAGES					
FIXED RATES					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	0.95% for 1 year	0.75%	Fixed rate for up to 10 years	
First National	0800 080088	5.40% to 30.6.01	75%	225%	
First National	0845 805 0500	0.15% to 1.9.03	0.5%	225%	No AHP for up to 10 years
VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	1.50% for 1 year	0.5%	225% rebate	
First National	0800 080088	4.44% to 30.6.01	75%	225%	
First National	0845 805 0500	5.05% to 1.9.03	0.5%	225%	Reduced rate
FIRST TIME BUYERS FIXED RATES					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	3.80% to 1.0.01	0.5%	225%	No AHP for up to 10 years
First National	0800 080088	5.50% to 30.6.01	75%	225%	No high lending fee (AHP)
First National	0845 805 0500	5.05% to 1.9.03	0.5%	225%	No high lending fee
FIRST TIME BUYERS VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES					
Scottham Bank	01902 311486	2.25% to 1.9.03	0.5%	225%	0% of advance repaid
First National	0800 080088	5.50% to 30.6.01	75%	225%	Refund of rate fee
First National	0845 805 0500	5.05% to 1.9.03	0.5%	225%	Refund of rate fee

UNSECURED PERSONAL LOANS					
Telephone	APR %	Fixed monthly payments on £5k over 3 yrs	With insurance	Without insurance	
UNSECURED					
Scottham Bank	0345 421421	9.9% H	£183.13	£166.11	
First National	0800 080088	12.5%	£180.33	£165.77	
First National	0191 680 9999	12.8% A	£183.75	£168.38	
SECURED LOANS (SECOND CHARGE)					
Telephone	APR	Max. CTV Advance	Term		
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	9.7%	£2k to £15k	6 months to 25 years	
First National	0800 080088	10.7%	£2.5k to £100k	3 years to 25 years	
First National	0845 100103	11.2%	£2k to £10k	Up to 40 years	

OVERDRAFTS					
Telephone	Account	% p.a.	APR	% p.a.	APR
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	9.95%	12.00%	2.20%	29.8%
First National	0800 080088	11.0%	12.00%	2.10%	29.3%
First National	0845 100103	11.2%	12.00%	2.10%	29.3%
CREDIT CARDS					
Telephone	Card Type	Rate % p.a.	APR	% p.a.	APR
Capital One Bank	0800 888000	Visa	0.569% A	6.50% A	54 days
RBS Advantage	0800 077770	Visa	0.541% A	7.50% A	56 days
Co-operative Bank	0800 109900	Advantage Visa	0.569% A	6.50% A	0 days
GOLD CARDS					
Capital One Bank	0800 888000	Visa	0.569% A	6.50% A	54 days
Co-operative Bank	0800 109900	Advantage Visa	0.569% A	6.50% A	54 days
RBS Advantage	0800 077770	Visa	0.541% A	7.50% A	56 days
STORE CARDS					
Telephone	Payment by direct debit	Payment by other methods	% p.a.	APR	% p.a.
John Lewis	Via store	Via store	1.30%	18.0%	1.30%
John Lewis	Via store	Via store	1.50%	20.0%	1.50%
John Lewis	Via store	Via store	1.70%	22.0%	1.70%

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS (net)					
Guaranteed Income Bond	0161 380 3808	1 Year	£10,000	6.25% F	Year
Guaranteed Income Bond	0161 380 3808	2 Year	£10,000	5.75% F	Year
Guaranteed Income Bond	0161 380 3808	3 Year	£10,000	5.25% F	Year
Guaranteed Income Bond	0161 380 3808	4 Year	£10,000	4.75% F	Year
Guaranteed Income Bond	0161 380 3808	5 Year	£10,000	4.25% F	Year

OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS (gross)					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	Instant	£10,000	7.00% F	Year
First National	0800 080088	Instant	£10,000	7.00% F	Year
First National	0845 100103	Instant	£10,000	7.00% F	Year
NATIONAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (gross)					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	Instant	£10,000	7.00% F	Year
First National	0800 080088	Instant	£10,000	7.00% F	Year
First National	0845 100103	Instant	£10,000	7.00% F	Year

OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS (gross)					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	Instant	£10,000	7.00% F	Year
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First National	0800 080088	Instant	£10,000	7.00% F	Year
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First National	0800 080088	Instant	£10,000	7.00% F	Year
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Scottham Bank	0800 133149	Instant	£10,000	7.00% F	Year
First National	0800 080088	Instant	£10,000	7.00% F	Year
First National	0845 100103	Instant	£10,000	7.00% F	Year
NATIONAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (gross)					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	Instant	£10,000	7.00% F	Year
First National	0800 080088	Instant	£10,000	7.00% F	Year
First National	0845 100103	Instant	£10,000	7.00% F	Year

BEST SAVINGS RATES

Telephone	Account	Interest rate	Deposit	Rate	Interest rate
INSTANT ACCESS					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	Instant	£1	6.75%	Day
First National	0800 080088	Instant	£20	6.50%	Year
First National	0845 100103	Instant	£100	6.00%	Year
First National	0845 100103	Instant	£5,000	7.00%	Year
INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	Instant	£1	6.75%	Day
First National	0800 080088	Instant	£20	6.50%	Year
First National	0845 100103	Instant	£100	6.00%	Year
First National	0845 100103	Instant	£5,000	7.00%	Year
NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	30 Day	£1,000	7.00%	Year
First National	0800 080088	30 Day	£1,000	7.00%	Year
First National	0845 100103	30 Day	£1,000	7.00%	Year
First National	0845 100103	30 Day	£1,000	7.00%	Year
CHEQUE ACCOUNTS					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	Instant	£1,000	6.45%	Month
First National	0800 080088	Instant	£1,000	5.50%	Day
First National	0845 100103	Instant	£1,000	5.75%	Year
First National	0845 100103	Instant	£1,000	6.75%	Year
FIXED RATE BONDS					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	Fixed Rate Bond	£10,000	7.50% F	Year
First National	0800 080088	Fixed Rate Bond	£10,000	8.00% F	Year
First National	0845 100103	Fixed Rate Bond	£10,000	7.50% F	Year
First National	0845 100103	Fixed Rate Bond	£10,000	7.50% F	Year
FIRST TESSAS					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year
First National	0800 080088	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year
First National	0845 100103	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year
First National	0845 100103	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year
FOLLOW-ON TESSAS					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year
First National	0800 080088	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year
First National	0845 100103	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year
First National	0845 100103	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year

INSTANT ACCESS					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	Instant	£1	6.75%	Day
First National	0800 080088	Instant	£20	6.50%	Year
First National	0845 100103	Instant	£100	6.00%	Year
First National	0845 100103	Instant	£5,000	7.00%	Year
INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	Instant	£1	6.75%	Day
First National	0800 080088	Instant	£20	6.50%	Year
First National	0845 100103	Instant	£100	6.00%	Year
First National	0845 100103	Instant	£5,000	7.00%	Year
NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	30 Day	£1,000	7.00%	Year
First National	0800 080088	30 Day	£1,000	7.00%	Year
First National	0845 100103	30 Day	£1,000	7.00%	Year
First National	0845 100103	30 Day	£1,000	7.00%	Year
CHEQUE ACCOUNTS					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	Instant	£1,000	6.45%	Month
First National	0800 080088	Instant	£1,000	5.50%	Day
First National	0845 100103	Instant	£1,000	5.75%	Year
First National	0845 100103	Instant	£1,000	6.75%	Year
FIXED RATE BONDS					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	Fixed Rate Bond	£10,000	7.50% F	Year
First National	0800 080088	Fixed Rate Bond	£10,000	8.00% F	Year
First National	0845 100103	Fixed Rate Bond	£10,000	7.50% F	Year
First National	0845 100103	Fixed Rate Bond	£10,000	7.50% F	Year
FIRST TESSAS					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year
First National	0800 080088	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year
First National	0845 100103	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year
First National	0845 100103	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year
FOLLOW-ON TESSAS					
Scottham Bank	0800 133149	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year
First National	0800 080088	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year
First National	0845 100103	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year
First National	0845 100103	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year

FIXED RATE BONDS					
Northwich & Peterborough	01733 372222	Fixed Rate Bond	6 Months	£5,000	7.55% <i>Year</i>
Westchase	0800 222200	Primer Fixed Rate	28.2 <i>Year</i>	£10,000	8.00% <i>Year</i>
Northwich & Peterborough	01733 372222	Branch Fixed Rate Bond	5 <i>Year</i>	£500	7.55% <i>Year</i>
Firstcall	0800 373711	Fixed Rate	1 <i>Year</i>	£2,500	7.93% <i>Year</i>

FIRST TESSAS					
Northwich & Peterborough	01733 372222		5 <i>Year</i>	£100	8.00% <i>Year</i>
Barnet & Dingley BS	0800 952586		5 <i>Year</i>	£200	8.00% <i>Year</i>
Donnington BS	01325 356366		5 <i>Year</i>	£1,000	8.00% <i>Year</i>

Home in on the best deal

A bewildering choice of mortgage deals confronts borrowers these days.

Tony Lyons explains how to pick the right type

The house buying season is currently in full swing. Estate agents throughout the country are seeing plenty of customers wanting to buy a new home. And mortgage lenders have plenty of money which they are eager to lend.

Buying a house is probably the largest single purchase any of us ever makes but it can be a stressful and expensive business. Not only do you have to deal with smooth-talking estate agents, you will also probably need a solicitor and then, unless you have a pile of cash, you need to arrange a mortgage.

Once upon a time, the choice of mortgage was easy. There was the conventional repayment loan or an endowment mortgage. Both had variable interest rates, changing as lenders moved their rates up and down with the general economic climate.

Nowadays, it is much more complicated, with many needing to seek advice from either a lender or a mortgage broker. While most will find you a suitable package, in the past you were never sure if you were being sold a mortgage that best suited your wallet or one that earned the provider the highest commission. This was especially true when it came to endowment mortgages.

Now, most leading providers have signed up to a voluntary code of conduct, devised by the Council of Mortgage Lenders, which stipulates that the lender should receive full details of the charges and the reasons why a particular mortgage was recommended. The Government is keeping a watchful eye on how the new code operates but has warned that if it fails to curb any excesses in the market, it will step in with legislation and that mortgage lending will come under the aegis of the Financial Services Authority, the new super regulator.

So, how do you decide on the type of mortgage that best suits you? "The right type of home loan for anyone will depend on their individual circumstances," says Siobhan Hotten, marketing manager of John Charcol, an independent financial



Ideal situations: Borrowers need to shop around for the right mortgage

adviser and the largest mortgage broker in the UK. "So much will depend on the clients' attitude to risk."

The most favoured means of paying off a mortgage are:

Repayment method: the traditional means of repayment, where every monthly payment goes towards paying off the interest and some of the capital.

"This suits most people, especially if they have a low-risk attitude and are in salaried occupations," Ms Hotten says. However, it is inflexible. Nowadays, we tend to move house every six or seven years. Someone in their late twenties can expect to move five or six times before they retire. But in the early days of a repayment mortgage, only a small amount of capital is repaid. If

you move house, you will probably have to take out a new loan, maybe for another 20 or 25 years. This will mean you go on extending the time you will be paying off your borrowings.

Interest-only mortgages: more flexible, as you can transfer the mortgage when you move house. You may have to top up the loan every time you move or take out an additional mortgage and you will have to repay the capital at the end of the period.

Repayment of the sum borrowed is normally done through one or other saving schemes, the most tax efficient of which are:

With-profits endowments, where you pay premiums into a life assurance plan. Nowadays, the low-cost versions of these plans assume the insurance company will

continue to pay at least 80 per cent of the current bonus rate - that is the profit you make on the policy - and forecast growth of 7.5 per cent a year.

"These policies were oversold in the 1980s," comments Ms Hotten, "and have been heavily criticised. They are suitable for those with a low attitude to risk. They offer valuable life cover and are quite often packaged with critical illness cover, protecting you if you are unable to work."

The past criticism was due to the high commission rates paid to advisers, often equal to the first year's premium, and the decline in bonus rates in recent years due to falling inflation and the consequent decline in yields on fixed-interest stocks. But they appear to have stabilised and insurance companies are now more realistic on the growth rates they are forecasting for their life funds.

A 30-year-old non-smoker should expect to pay around £75 a month or less with one of the better insurers for a 25-year, low-cost with-profits endowment of £50,000, or under £80 a month if includes critical illness cover, which pays a lump sum on diagnosis of a life-threatening illness.

PEP mortgages, where you pay into a personal equity plan (PEP), using the proceeds to pay off the capital whenever you have accumulated enough. Now that we know PEPs have been ring fenced with no lifetime limit, they have come back into popularity.

"This type of repayment suits someone

who is aware of the risks involved with equity investment. When Individual Savings Accounts arrive next year," says Ms Hotten, "there is no reason why they could not be used for repaying a mortgage."

Pension mortgages, where you repay the capital out of the lump sum you are allowed to take out of your pension fund when you retire. Under the rules, up to a quarter of your accumulated pension can be taken in cash at retirement.

"These are best suited to the highly paid who have high net worth, as it means that a substantial sum will be paid over to a mortgage lender at a time when most will be looking for ways to maximise their income," Ms Hotten warns.

There are a number of inducements being offered to mortgage borrowers these days. Cash backs, discounts and fixed-rate home loans are very popular, but do watch out for penalties. In addition, some of the newer entrants into the mortgage market, including Virgin and Kleinwort Benson, are offering flexible lending packages. These are modern "lifestyle accounts" where, as long as you stay within their rules, your home loan is treated as just part of your overall borrowing and you can pay as little or as much as you can afford so long as mortgage is paid off in due course.

"Whatever you do, make sure you shop around for the home loan that meets your needs and at a price you can afford," Ms Hotten says. "If you find it confusing or too complex, go and see a truly professional adviser."

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APR
(VARIABLE)

Discounts are off our standard variable rate and savings are made on our normal monthly payments. Typical example assumes borrowers take out a variable rate of 5.40% after a 2.70% two year discount off our current standard variable rate of 8.10%. A minimum deposit of 10% is required for this rate. A couple (male and female, non-smokers, aged 25, applying for a £40,000 endowment mortgage over 25 years on a purchase price of £45,000, 300 monthly payments of £166.50 net of MURAS at 10% will be required. APR is based on the 2 year discount applying throughout the term of the mortgage. In practice after the discount rate period, our then standard variable interest rate will apply. Total Amount Payable will be £39,948, which includes 300 mortgage interest payments. Final repayment of capital, which is mortgage sum of £100 excluding VAT (and assuming the same solicitor acts for both of us), a fee of £295, 300 monthly payments and various insurance premiums of £11.53, a valuation fee of £140 which is refunded upon completion and redemption fee of £40. For loans exceeding 40% of the purchase price or valuation, whichever is the lower, an additional charge will be made. This additional charge does not apply to existing Nationwide mortgage borrowers moving home. The £295 fee is non-refundable except where an application for a discounted rate is declined before an offer is issued. A typical monthly endowment premium is £64 (variable) which is not included in the monthly interest payment shown. The rate quoted is only available to home movers. Payments must be made by Direct Debit or FlexiAccount transfer for the term of the discounted rate. Early redemption fees are charged if you repay your mortgage, or transfer to another offer during the first five years. For full details see relevant literature. Mortgages are subject to status, valuation and security. Available to those aged 18 or over only. It is a condition of this offer that the Society's HomePlan buildings and contents insurance is purchased. HomePlan is underwritten by London and Edinburgh Insurance Company Limited. The Society will receive commission in respect of any HomePlan policies taken up. To comply with the Association of British Insurers (ABI) Code of Practice for the sale of general insurance, Nationwide Building Society is defined as an independent intermediary which acts as your agent and accepts responsibility for the advice provided and for the arranging of your insurance. The product shown above is subject to availability and may be withdrawn without notice at any time. Rates correct at time of going to press. What Mortgage Best National Lender Award 1997 and 1998 - best value for money standard variable rate mortgage over 10 years of all national building societies and banks based on a loan of £50,000. Please note that for various legal, regulatory and customer service requirements your call will be recorded when you telephone 0800 30 20 10. Nationwide Building Society, Nationwide Life Limited and Nationwide Unit Trust Managers Limited represent only the Nationwide Marketing Group which is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority for life assurance, pensions and unit trust products. Nationwide Unit Trust Managers Limited is also regulated by IMRO. Written quotations available on request from Nationwide Building Society, Nationwide House, Pipers Way, Swindon SN38 1NW. Nationwide is a member of the Building Societies Ombudsman Scheme and subscribes to the Banking and Mortgage Codes, copies of which are available on request.



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New rules to protect borrowers

Facing statutory regulations, most lenders have signed up to a voluntary code of conduct. Tony Bonsignore wonders if the industry can put its own house in order

Despite the fact that buying a house is the biggest single investment most of us ever make, mortgage borrowers have historically been afforded relatively little protection from poor advisers. The 1986 Financial Services Act, the cornerstone of investor protection, excludes mortgages.

So while financial advisers have to adhere to very strict rules every time an investment is recommended, when it comes to mortgages they have, in the past, been free to advise clients in anyway they like.

This led to increasing accusations that some people were being sold mortgages they didn't fully understand or were not best suited to their needs. Worse still, there was no independent arbitration service if a mortgage broker was used.

All in all, it added up to pretty poor deal for the borrower.

This situation did not escape the Labour Party which, in the run-up to last year's general election, threatened to regulate the industry directly, a move which could seriously eat into lenders' profits.

Faced with this threat, and mounting criticism from consumer organisations, the mortgage industry finally took action with the launch of a new Mortgage Code.

Put together by the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML), the code has been in operation for just over a year. It attempts to put in place a detailed framework which all lenders must follow.

To begin with, mortgage advice is now split into three types and advisers have to tell you which type you are receiving. An adviser can therefore offer you advice on just one mortgage, information on a particular company's range of mortgages, or full advice on the whole market.

If the latter, it must be backed in writing, and failure to give proper advice can lead to a claim for compensation. The idea is that you will not be fooled into thinking you have received full advice when you haven't, a major criticism of the old system.

The mortgage market is hugely complex. The theory is that under the new code, if you choose not to take advice, then you have no cause for complaint. If, however, you choose to take advice which subsequently turns out to be poor, then you have a legitimate complaint.

Under the code, advisers must give clear information on key aspects of any deal.

including the repayment method, the type of interest rate, the costs, any penalties and all other relevant information. Providing this is done properly, the development of the new code is very welcome.

The complaints procedure for borrowers has also been overhauled. Previously, anyone with a grievance who got their mortgage through a bank or building society could go to the bank or building society ombudsmen.

But if they had bought their mortgage elsewhere they had no means of registering of complaint and no chance of any compensation. The CML has responded by setting up the CML Arbitration Service, which is free for borrowers with complaints against any lender.

Last month saw a key part of the code put in place, when it was extended to the 40,000-odd intermediaries who account for about half of all new mortgage business. The result of this is that the vast majority of lenders will now refuse to do business with any intermediary who has not signed up to the code.

So is the code proving a success? So far, the answer is unclear. The code does have a number of serious flaws. For a start, anyone can register themselves as a mortgage broker providing they stump up £50. This compares with other financial advisers who are forced to undertake a series of demanding exams and training courses. Although mortgage brokers are being encouraged to take formal exams, they are not forced to under the code.

Old habits die hard and many staff at the main lenders know little or nothing about the new code, so they are unable to comply with it.

Some of the old guard treat it as an irrelevance, continuing to do things in exactly the same way as before. And because the code is voluntary, not backed up in law, there is little to stop them doing so.

Of course, it is still early days. The code does appear to be having some positive effects. And lenders have an extra incentive to make the code work. The Treasury minister Helen Liddell recently warned the industry that it had just one year to make it work or face statutory regulation.

Tony Bonsignore writes for 'Financial Adviser'.

Council of Mortgage Lenders: 0171-437 0655

7/MORTGAGE SURVEY

Flexible alternatives to traditional bank and building society mortgages are on the increase. Simon Read reports

Move off the high street



Richard Branson may not profit from his new loan

Richard Branson is probably the nation's favourite businessman. He's long been aware of his personal popularity, expanding his Virgin empire on the strength of it. But his move into mortgages last year could be his first big miscalculation.

Why? Because Virgin is just one of many new companies hoping to make a mint out of home loans. Despite the hype, Virgin's One Account, launched last October, has gained barely 1,000 customers, a fraction of the amount most lenders can rack up. Coventry Building Society, for instance, lent more than £600m last year, almost 10 times as much as Virgin.

Other new mortgage lenders are as well known as Virgin - such as Direct Line and Legal & General. The new competition means anyone sticking to building societies or banks for their mortgage is missing out on potentially much better deals.

What is the spin these lenders have brought to the mortgage market? Flexibility for one. This has been embraced by the likes of Legal & General, Virgin Direct, Kleinwort Benson and Bank of Scotland Mortgage Direct. Each offers a slightly different deal, but the basic con-

cept of allowing you to pay off the mortgage when you want to and to borrow against it when you need to, is common to all. In effect, they let you to run your mortgage as a current account.

According to Virgin, the fact that people keep savings and borrowings separate is costing them money. Analysts at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson claim that collectively we're losing £2.1bn a year because a different rate of interest is charged to borrowers than is paid out to savers. In effect, banks and building societies are taking a turn, or profit, on our cash.

Virgin says the new home loans that give you an overdraft facility are better. "While it's in the interest of the traditional bank and building societies to charge different rates of interest for savings and borrowings, it certainly doesn't benefit their customers," says Jayne-Anne Gadhia, managing director of Virgin One. "Our customers like the fact that they are constantly minimising their borrowing and can repay their mortgage several years early."

The Virgin One account is run by the Royal Bank of Scotland, the same staid institution that owns Direct Line, which has

also introduced a new deal. "We provide a simple, straightforward product with no hidden fees, tie-ins or penalties," Direct Line's Stephen Geraghty says.

The two approaches are vastly different, yet offer equally interesting deals for the right borrower. But that's the nature of the market today. Many of the new mortgage lenders want to grab their own little pocket of customers. The flexible mortgage is attractive but will not be right for everyone. The simple no-frills approach can be a much better option for some.

There is a drawback to flexible mortgages: the cost. When you consider that both Kleinwort Benson and Virgin Direct charge 8.2 per cent, that doesn't seem bad compared with, say, Halifax's standard variable rate of 8.7 per cent. But the rate seems less competitive against Direct Line's 7.94 per cent.

In fact, few new borrowers pay the standard rate. Most naturally prefer to enjoy the lower cost of a discount or fixed-rate mortgage. The good news is that these are available from most high street lenders.

Another growing band of new mortgage lenders are known as the nonconformists.

Before any beatniks or "travellers" rush to sign up, you should know that these lenders are offering mortgages to those who can't get a mortgage on the high street because they have a poor credit record or a county court judgment against them.

The idea has been imported from America and, indeed, some of the new UK lenders are American-owned companies, names such as Future Mortgages, Kensington Mortgage

Corporation, The Money Store, Preferred Mortgages, Southern Pacific and Transamerica. But altruistic they're not. They are simply mopping up a gap in the market, and charging borrowers a pretty penny for their trouble.

You should expect to pay around 10 per cent for a loan from these lenders. That is high but as Michael Bolton at National Home Loans points out: "We hope that after two to three years borrowers can switch to a

traditional rate mortgage. By then, they will have shown that they can meet their monthly mortgage commitments and so will be given a better hearing in the high street."

Bank of Scotland Mortgages Direct: 0800 810810; Direct Line: 0181-649 9099; Future Mortgages: 01189 514 940; Kleinwort Benson: 0171-956 6600; Legal & General: 0500 666555; Virgin Direct: 08456 000001

The buyer's market takes off

Fierce competition among lenders means some great deals for borrowers. Abigail Montrose seeks them out

Mortgage lenders are bending over backwards to attract new business, which is good news for home buyers. The range of products on the market has never been better and there are some great deals to be had.

Currently, fixed-rate deals are attracting most interest. Recent hikes in interest rates have seen borrowers looking for security and, with many lenders expecting interest rates to be lower in the medium term, fixed-rate mortgages are being attractively priced.

Fixed-rate mortgages are usually for two or five years, with the five-year market offering some particularly attractive deals. One of the cheapest five-year fixes on offer is 5.99 per cent from Northern Rock. But watch out for the hefty £495 application fee, and the compulsory buildings and contents insurance. You will

also be tied to Northern Rock for two years after the fixed rate has elapsed.

Attractive five-year rates are also offered by Abbey National, John Charcol, Nationwide and Halifax but, again, you usually are expected to remain with the lender for a further year or two once the fix has ended.

For those who want to ensure their mortgage repayments do not rise above a certain level but want to benefit if interest rates fall, a capped-rate mortgage is the answer. Among the best deals on offer is Bradford & Bingley's four-year capped rate of 6.25 per cent. The arrangement fee is £295 and there are no compulsory insurances, but you will be expected to stay with the society for a further two years.

If you want to avoid redemption penalties after the capped period, you

could consider John Charcol's 6.55 per cent cap, which runs until end of June 2003, or Halifax's 6.8 per cent capped mortgage where the cap lasts until end of August 2002.

For those who want a variable-rate mortgage, there are plenty of good discounts available. "One of the lowest two-year deals on offer is the Scarborough Building Society's 3.99 discount," says Simon Tyler of mortgage brokers, Chase de Vere Mortgage Management. "If you're looking for the deepest discount over two years this is currently it. But with compulsory insurance it might not be the best deal around."

Those looking for a five-year discount could consider Nationwide's 1.35 per cent discount. While not the largest discount around, Nationwide's standard-variable rate is 8.1 per cent, against the average

for all lenders of 8.7 per cent, which brings the rate down to 6.75 per cent.

"Another option is cashbacks, although these are less popular than they used to be," says Mr Tyler. But for those who like this option, perhaps because they plan to use the cashback to fund the deposit, there are good deals around.

Northern Rock is offering an 8 per cent cashback on its standard variable-rate mortgage and Leeds & Holbeck is offering a 7 per cent cashback on loans up to 85 per cent. In both cases, early redemption penalties last for six years.

John Charcol: 0800 718191; Leeds & Holbeck: 0500 225777; Abbey National: 0800 555100; Northern Rock: 0845-605 0500; Halifax: 0800 101110; Nationwide: 0800 302010; Scarborough: 0990 133149; Bradford & Bingley: 0800 570800

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The people's car for toffs

Road test Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph, by John Simister

A Rolls-Royce, they say, is the best car in the world. Nonsense, I say. A Rolls-Royce has always been a desirable and lovingly created thing, but the best car in the world? Hardly, especially when the standard Rolls-Royce offering has barely changed since 1980. The motor car, as Rolls-Royce always calls it, has become out of date, off the pace, a state of no one's art but its maker's. Such was the status quo until now. But something momentous has happened. Rolls-Royce Motor Cars has produced an all-new Rolls-Royce motor car, and it proves that the Rolls engineers have listened well.

Rolls-Royce saloons are usually called Silver something, and this time it's the turn of a seraph to be silvered. Its looks are an amalgam of the just-deceased Silver Spirit/Silver Spur, the earlier Silver Shadow whose side creases are echoed in the Seraph, and the grandiose Silver Cloud.

The result is a car which looks modern, but which couldn't possibly be anything other than a Rolls-Royce. The nose is still high and proud, but the grille is squatter, less sharp-edged and more like an ancient Greek temple than ever.

Rolls-Royce was about to be bought by BMW, although this is not cut and



dried. VW has made an offer, and a final decision will be made by shareholders in June. If successful, the bid would be the ultimate in ironies: the makers of the People's Car owning the Toff's Car.

Up to now, Rolls-Royce has been leaning heavily on BMW for components and expertise, which is why the old Rolls-Royce V8 monster-motor, 6.75 litres of low-tech, low-revving history, has gone in favour of a BMW V12 of "just" 5.4 litres. That may change in a year or so's time if the VW bid succeeds.

A German engine in the ultimate British car. The idea is hard to take, but

it certainly works on the practical level. Power is up from the old Silver Spur's 300bhp, achieved with the help of a small turbocharger, to 322bhp, achieved through being modern and efficient. The engine is practically identical to that used in the BMW 750iL, apart from the badges on the cam-covers and the calibration of the management system to suit its new surroundings. The transmission comes from the same source, as does the air-conditioning system.

There is absolutely no doubt about the provenance of the interior, though. The dashboard is gentler and curvier in

shape, and the switchgear is much more modern than before, but lustrous wood and taut, rich leather are as all-pervading as ever, the air vents are still enormous and you still don't get a rev-counter because exact engine speed should be of no concern to the Rolls-Royce driver.

To drive, the Silver Seraph is a revelation. It sounds different from before, thanks mainly to its four extra cylinders, and it is both faster and quieter, but the major transformation is in the way it copes with bumps and bends. The body structure is a 65 per cent stiffer than before, so there's none of the groan and shudder of old.

This extra body stiffness together with new suspension allow the Seraph to soak up bumps without heaving and floating. They also make this vast car feel agile and eager in a way its ship-like predecessor never could. Never has a Rolls-Royce felt so all-of-a-piece, such fun to drive, yet so comfortable for all its occupants.

The Silver Seraph has caught up with current capabilities, without losing the feeling of being a Rolls-Royce. In fact, it's closer to its maker's ideals than ever. The best car in the world? Now, it's not such a daft idea after all.

SPECIFICATIONS

Price: £155,000.
Engine: 5,379cc V12, 24 valves,
326bhp at 5,000rpm.
Transmission: five-speed
automatic gearbox, rear-wheel
drive.
Performance: top speed
140mph, 0-60 in 6.9sec, 11-16mpg.

Rivals
BMW 750iL: £75,050. Similar
engine to the Seraph's, half the
price and it comes complete
with a TV. Delightful to drive,
but nothing like the presence.

Daimler Super Eight: £62,775.
Supercharged V8 from the Jaguar
XJR, in a longer and more
luxurious body. The closest you'll
get to a Rolls-Royce ambience
without buying a Rolls-Royce.

Mercedes-Benz S600:
£102,490. A V12, like the Rolls
and the BMW, but bigger and
more powerful. A huge car,
beautifully built but hardly
beautiful. New model due in
the autumn.



GAVIN
GREEN

Skoda's emergence as top marque in the recent JD Power customer satisfaction survey may have raised eyebrows, spoilt a few stand-up comedians' jokes and given the headline writers some fun.

But we really should not be all that surprised. Skoda are now Czech Volkswagens, rather than a testament to the technical shortcomings of Communism. "The brand name from hell", as a marketing magazine once termed it, has now teamed up with the brand name loved by the brand gurus, so a good JD Power showing was always on the cards.

Yet it can't just be the VW influence. Look at the results in detail, and you'll find Skoda well on top and Volkswagen way behind, just above the industry average. Audi, VW's blue-chip brand, is a notch higher, still well behind Skoda. Clearly, then, customer satisfaction isn't just about good products. Are Skodas really better than VWs and Audis - or Mercedes-Benzes, BMWs and Toyotas? They are not.

But they do have very different dealers, and a big chunk of customer satisfaction is obviously to do with the selling and servicing experience. Skoda dealers tend to be small and family owned, and situated in rural areas. In short, they are old-fashioned garages. They know their customers by their first names - and if their buildings and facilities are out-of-date, then so are their standards of courtesy. A large number are ex-Rover dealers, ditched when the British maker pruned its dealer network.

Rover, along with most other major car makers in Britain, has been shedding small, rural, family-run garages in favour of big, multi-franchise groups. They can afford bigger sites in prosperous, highly populated areas. They can afford better equipment to service cars, including high-tech computer monitoring. They can afford quality carpets, nice furniture, pretty receptionists, highly trained salesmen, lots of demo cars, big signs in the latest corporate livery - and the dealer principal has enough spare time to be able to take the odd "best sales performance of the month" car company-backed prize to the Caribbean.

Car dealerships are now slicker, more modern and more professional than ever. Which is why many people would rather deal with the friendly little bloke down the road, whose father's father set up the garage - never mind that the receptionist is his mum, the carpet in the showroom has seen better days, and they serve tea in mugs not coffee from an espresso machine.

As further proof, another maker renowned for its small, family-run provincial garages - Subaru - notched up second place in the JD Power study. Rover, Ford and Vauxhall - whose names used to be part of any small provincial British town, before local garages lost the franchises - all came near the bottom of the table.

The move to larger, more "professional" purveyors of goods is not confined to selling cars, of course. The trend is just as pronounced in groceries and white goods. It's the way the world is going, and no amount of consumer surveys showing that most of us would rather deal with small, personal outfits, close to our homes rather than a long drive away, is going to change things. Fewer, bigger dealers suit the "think big" mindset of our business leaders.

Customer satisfaction - the holy grail of all companies - is only a goal if it fits within the narrow confines of corporate thinking. Modern customer satisfaction is giving the customer not what he or she really wants, but what the company is prepared to offer.

Norton returns ... at 225mph

The troubled marque has plans for a superbike - but a German rival could trump it, writes Roland Brown

Once-mighty Norton is celebrating its centenary this year amid controversy that must be causing the founder, James Lansdowne Norton, to turn in his grave.

Norton Motors International, owned by the Canadian-based Aquilini property group, recently revealed a remarkable 1,500cc V8 superbike, the Nemesis, to be produced at its factory at Shenstone, in Staffordshire, later this year.

If this does reach production it will signify a tremendous comeback for Norton. The V8's 260bhp output and 225mph top speed would make it by far the world's fastest and most powerful superbike. But as usual with Norton, the story is more complex than it seems. The Nemesis is a concept bike that requires much development before being ready for production. Meanwhile another new Norton is already being produced - by Norton Motors Deutschland, the former German importer, which owns rights to the Norton name in most European countries except Britain. The C652SM is being built by Tigrafit, of Farnborough.

In contrast to the futuristic Nemesis, the C652SM is a simple roadster powered by the single-cylinder engine from BMW's F650. Despite being assembled in Farnborough, the C652SM cannot be sold in Britain. When the first 15 bikes

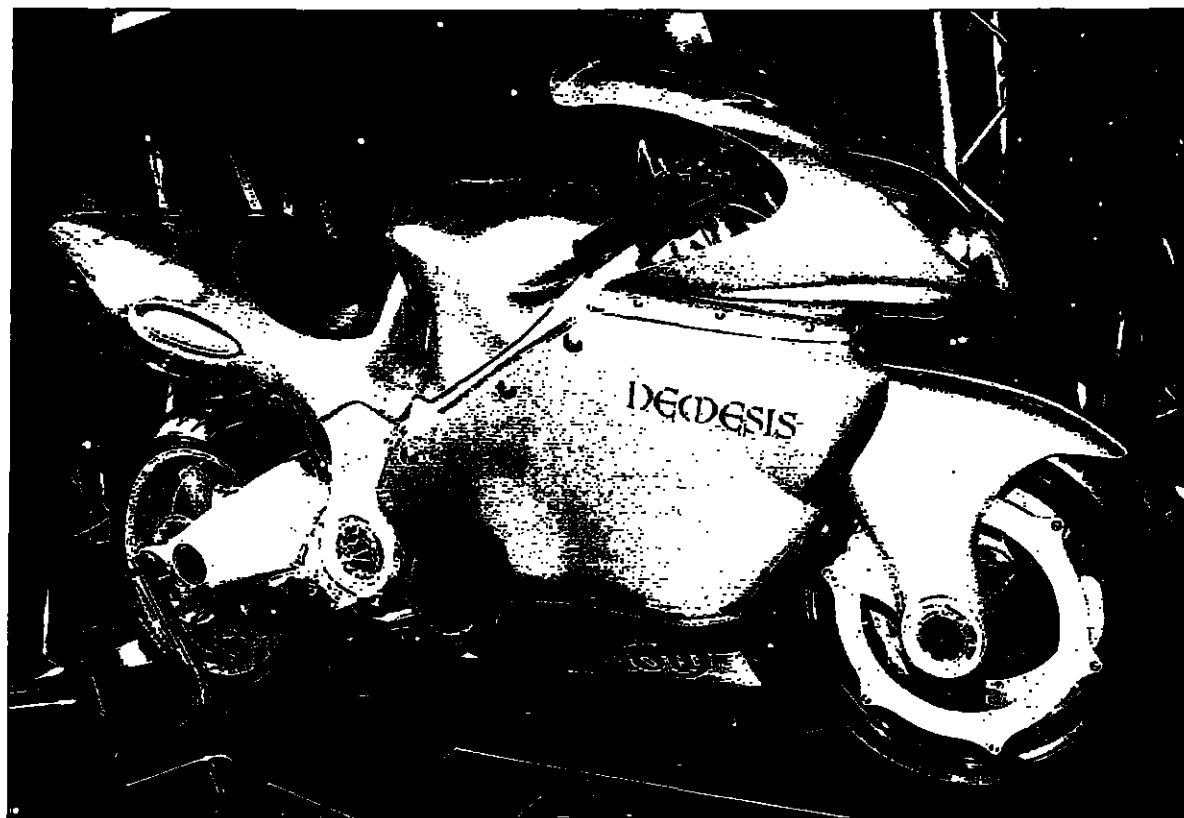
are completed at the end of this month they will be shipped to Norton Motors Deutschland's base near Munich. Most have been sold to German enthusiasts.

There is no love lost between the Canadian owners of Norton Motors International and Joe Seifert, boss of Norton Motors Deutschland. Seifert and Tigrafit have been issued with writs attempting to prevent them from producing the C652SM, although NMI accepts that Seifert has registered the Norton name in some countries.

Seifert, an enthusiast who sells spares for old Nortons and races one in classic events, is convinced that while the Nemesis may attract investment, it will never reach production. "It seems remarkable that NMI should present these proposals as the basis for a serious business plan to prospective shareholders," he says.

The Canadian-owned firm's proposals are certainly ambitious. According to NMI, the Nemesis will outperform Honda's CBR1100XX Super Blackbird, currently the world's fastest bike, by almost 50mph. It will also incorporate features such as a magnesium frame, active suspension and a push-button gear-change and clutch, none of which has yet been seen on a production bike.

According to NMI, the Nemesis will



be the flagship of a range including four-cylinder superbikes, a cruiser, the Commando, with a different 1500cc V8 engine, and single-cylinder models. All have been designed by Al Melling, of Melling Consultancy Design in Rochdale, Lancashire.

Melling, 54, says he has worked for many leading car and bike manufacturers. He is known in the automotive world for his work on a controversial but ultimately successful V8 engine for the sports car firm TVR. It may be relevant that the specification of the Nemesis is very similar to that of the Melling-designed 1500cc V8 announced several years ago by March, an American-owned firm that recently formed a partnership with Norton. That bike was due for production in 1996 but was never built. March's UK base at

Bicester in Oxfordshire is now closed.

Unlike the exotic Nemesis, the rival Norton firm's C652SM is a down-to-earth single-cylinder roadster that combines the 652cc BMW engine with a chassis based on that of Tigrafit's successful single-cylinder racing bike. The liquid-cooled, four-valve engine sits in a rigid tubular steel frame, which holds high-quality conventional cycle parts.

Styling is retro, with traditional Norton silver paint and low handlebars. The BMW engine produces a maximum of 47bhp - enough for a top speed of just over 100mph. The Norton is lively, pulling cleanly from low revs and reaching about 80mph before typical single-cylinder vibration becomes tiresome.

Where this Norton really scores is with its race-bred handling. The single's

light weight (just 158kg) and taut suspension combine with its sticky tyres and powerful single front Brembo disc brake to make it great fun on a twisty road - though there are plenty of cheaper and more powerful machines on the market.

One problem for British Norton enthusiasts is that because the C652SM cannot legally be sold in this country it would have to be bought from Norton Motors Deutschland (00 49 8151 28 708) and personally imported, with the buyer paying VAT on top of the basic price of DM 18,100 - a total of just over £7,000.

Alternatively, those looking for a more powerful Norton could wait for the 225mph Nemesis V8 to reach production. Such an event would be the perfect way to celebrate Norton's centenary - but, sadly, the wait may be a long one.

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784 AD 1,400	JA FCA 1,000	EC 880X 400	P18 200 1,200
78 ALE 2,500	BS FCA 1,000	JE 13 1,000	RAP 40X 800
885 BAR 1,800	FE FCA 1,000	JA 34 2,500	PER 588 1,745
827 BAF 1,800	FE 871 1,000	SA JMA 2,000	PER 882 500
82 BOC 4,200	FEN 351 1,400	KA 7782 2,000	RON 885 3,000
SP 8884 2,000	FF 8771 1,500	KDL 353 800	9439 RW 1,800
COE 847V 1,200	417 FS 1,800	SD 046F 1,000	940 198 1,800
CT 4570 2,500	1151 FM 1,200	LN 9705 1,200	SCP 985 1,700
C7E 77 1,400	PR 22 4,000	LNI 199 800	8885 SM 5,000
DA 9778 1,800	SL 59 2,500	72 MA 6,000	749 SHD 1,700
944 198C 1,200	800 GAH 3,200	M13 NSA 600	TA 8333 2,000
DBR 948 1,800	GJK 88 2,400	27 MHN 1,200	TAH 53 2,600
2285 DD 1,200	GJK 888 1,400	871 MBL 1,500	G1 USA 2,500
9710 DF 1,400	GBS 851 800	MJN 002 1,200	VER 558 1,200
589 DMD 2,000	HAZ 6 2,200	N 8825 1,500	XDA 58 500
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DS 85 10,000	LR 8812 75	NN 4480 1,200	32 YG 2,000

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Top: Davida Classic helmet and goggles are essential ride-wear. Above: Al Berg Albion Classic boots

Worn to be wild

You've got the classic bike, but you're still only half way there, reckons Giles Anderson

The burgeoning interest in classic bikes has sparked a resurgence in the whole classic style. And you have to have the gear to match the bike. "People are interested in the look," says Roy Buosi, owner of Bullet - a classic bike specialist shop. "They're after the cool-looking image of the top-up boys who used to head up the M1 at 100mph in the 1950s." It also gives the impression that you've been riding for a long time, according to Mr Buosi. "In bike circles there's a snob factor. You have to have the right badge or they won't talk to you."

First on the wish list for classic bike owners is the Belstaff Trail Master jacket costing £89.99. This black wax cotton jacket comes straight from the pre-leather 1940s. "It's generally for the middle-aged born-again bikers who remember the name from their teens," says Belstaff's John Wakefield. Underneath this, you need some Lewis leathers - jacket or trousers both priced from £100 upwards. For authentic boots, look to the £99.99 Alb Berg Albion Classic, which haven't changed since the Fifties. Davida's helmet, the pudding-basin Classic, costs upwards of £80 and is the most traditional of the new ones on offer. These don't conform to modern standards and are only for exhibition use. Davida also does a Classic Jet helmet, a legal version of the Classic. "We get a range of people," says David Fiddaman, managing director of Davida, "from those in their early 40s who used to be into motorcycles; those who just like style, to scooter riders." For the final dated touch, you need the Aviator Retro goggles, also available from Davida.

Stylish they may be, but Richard Rosenthal, of Classic Bike magazine, wouldn't recommend these outfits for the serious rider. He says a lot of the old-fashioned leather wears through quickly and pudding-basin helmets give you no protection down the back or the front of the head. But Roy Buosi remains unrepentant: "Safety is not the issue, it's the look."

Bullet - 0171-736 3811; Belstaff stockist - 01782 839 879; Victory Motorcycles - 0171-384 2074; Alb Berg - 01748 850615; Davida mail order catalogue - 0151 678 4656.

The school's fine, but the journey ...

You may live in your dream house, but if you spend two hours each day driving the children back and forth, maybe it's time to think about moving. Mary Wilson talked to people who fought free of the school run

Running children to and from school can take an inordinate amount of time out of the day, especially if you have children at more than one school. And many people who move out of London for a better quality of life find that there may be less pollution and less traffic, but they are spending more time in the car because the schools are some distance away.

Ann-Helen and Tony English had lived for 12 years in a beautiful Grade II* listed 15th-century house in Harrow Weald, Middlesex, which they and their children loved.

"It was a stunning old farmhouse, set in the middle of a massive garden," says Mrs English, who is an artist with a studio in Finsbury Park.

"However, when my daughter Dominique, who is now 10 years old, started to go to school in Hampstead, it was taking me anything from half an hour to an hour to drive her to school. And when my youngest daughter, Gabriella, [now six] started at school, I was spending another half-an-hour getting through Hampstead Village, and then the same again getting to work.

"I would get to my studio and then have

to turn around to go home to pick her up again at 12. It was terrible, and bad for everybody's health."

Although the family did not want to leave their lovely house and garden, they realised that they had to move nearer to the schools to improve the quality of their lives. So they have now bought a Thirties mock-Tudor house opposite Golders Hill Park, NW11.

"The noise of the traffic does get to me, but we are lucky enough to be facing the Hampstead Heath extension, which helps. I now can walk to school with my children through the park. It takes only five minutes, and I reckon I have saved around five hours a day," says Mrs English.

Liz Newman, of Goldschmidt & Howlands Hampstead office, which sold the house to the Englishs, says: "We get quite a number of people moving to Hampstead to get closer to the schools. I have one woman, who lives in Kensington, west London, looking at the moment. Her children go to school in Hampstead, and she is fed up with sitting in the car all day."

Tony Mullucks, of Mullucks Wells & Associates, in Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire, says: "I have just sold a house on the east side of town, near the Hertfordshire & Essex High School, because it was so close to the school. It is in a no through road, so it is quite safe for children to walk to school every day.

"That means that if there are after-school activities, or sports on Saturday morning, the parents don't have to ferry them back and forth. And if they start at the school at 11 years old and then go on to Cambridge, perhaps, the family knows it can be settled in one house for at least 10 years, as the station is close by, too," says Mr Mullucks.

Properties close to a school tend to be about 10 per cent more expensive than



The English family had to give up their country home... but Hampstead Heath and being able to walk to school are fine compensations

Kalpesh Lathigra

equivalent houses that are less conveniently placed, but parents are often happy to pay the extra price for their freedom. At the other side of the town, the same situation applies to houses near Bishop Stortford College.

"Any house within walking distance carries a premium," says Tony Mullucks, "and I can see that premium increasing as roads become more congested". The agent is selling two new five-bedroom houses close to the college, the playing fields and the primary school for £335,000 each.

Families are moving into Guildford, Surrey, too, if their children go to one of the several excellent schools in the city.

"I recently sold a five-bedroom modern house in Tormead Road to a family who had lived in Dorking. They wanted to move to Guildford to escape the previously lengthy school run taking their child to the High School," says Keith Remington, of Curchods.

The agent has a five-bedroom Thirties house in Grove Road, within walking distance of most of the Guildford schools, on the market for 420,000.

And in Ipswich, the same inward movement is occurring. Bidwells has been retained to find a client a substantial house, with one main proviso - that it be no more than 15 minutes away from

Woodbridge School, which his children are attending.

"More clients are making it clear that they will view only properties that are a short distance from the local school," says Guy Jenkinson, of Bidwells.

Paul Greenwood, managing director of Stacks Relocation, often sees parents buy a home in a second-choice area because of the school run. "Purchasers often put journey time from school as a top priority when property-hunting.

"Houses within five miles of good schools are in great demand, and sell for a significant premium, but they may also come up for sale more often. Turnover is

higher, as the home may be sold for something more suitable in a different location once the children have left school."

He suggests that it is worth practising the school run, in both directions, at the appropriate time both morning and afternoon before committing yourself to a property. "Traffic patterns may be such that a property that is farther away may in fact be better in terms of travel time, which is the crucial factor," he says.

Goldschmidt & Howland, 0171-435 4404; Mullucks Wells & Associates, 01279 753400; Stacks Relocation, 01666 860523; Curchods, 01932 874488; Bidwells, 01223 841841.

Why a bad job can give you a shock

Having faith in your workmen is all well and good, but sometimes it is misplaced, as Clare and Audrey found to their horror. Penny Jackson finds out why

Two weeks ago, Audrey Chaussin, working as an au pair in London, was lucky not to have been killed while taking a shower. As she stepped into a running bath she reached out for the shower attachment. At once her whole body started shaking. She managed to turn off the tap before dropping the shower and clambering out of the bath.

Since she was alone in the house her first thought was to call her mother in France. "I was very frightened. I thought I was ill," recalls Ms Chaussin. "But when I described to my mother what had happened she suggested that it could be an electric shock. The washing machine and dryer are both in the bathroom and it was the first time I had taken a shower while they were working."

By contrast, it was quite usual for her employer, Clare Wessely, to get up early and put on the washing machine before showering. "I had felt tingling on and off for a long time and it had got worse over the past few months. But nobody else felt it, so I put it down to static and assumed it was just me. As soon as Audrey told us what had happened we had everything checked. It is terrifying to think what might have happened," says Mrs Wessely.

The electrician who was called in discovered that the washing machine had not been earthed and was also on a single wire, not a ring main. "It was lethal," he says. "The electric current was being carried through the water pipes and it could easily have caused a fatal accident. The workmanship



Audrey Chaussin got more than she bargained for when she tried to take a shower: a powerful electric shock that could have proved fatal

Photograph: Neville Elder

was terrible and the appliances should never have been put in the bathroom in the first place."

Even though it was only three years ago that the Wesselys had major work done on their London house, they now face another bill for its rewiring. The scenario is not unfamiliar. The building company, recommended by their architect, has since gone out of business.

"We realised right from the beginning that the electrician was a disaster. He put in a transformer the size of a house and successive electricians have commented that it should be in a museum," says Clare Wessely.

The family is by no means alone in finding that the person or company responsible for sub-standard work is no longer

accountable. But, if someone is doing a job in a dangerous manner, it cannot be shrugged off. So where to start?

If an architect has been involved, it might be tempting to place the responsibility there. Tony Chapman of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), says that the architect does bear some responsibility if he signs work off. An architect

must ensure that craftsmen he or she recommends or appoints are fully qualified and that certificates are issued as to the quality of the work. "This is in effect self-certification since architects cannot check every pipe or bit of wiring." Qualifications should guarantee a good standard of workmanship.

In the gas installing business Corgi registration has been

tightened up. Last month an identity card scheme was launched so that at a glance customers can check the credentials and areas of competence of the operative. The nearest equivalent in the electrical world is the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contractors (NICIEC) but unlike Corgi registration it is not required under law.

However, the NICIEC and the Institute of Electrical Engineers do provide some redress if one of their members is guilty of sub-standard work. Poor workmanship was used for the first time in a charge of manslaughter after a young father was killed by an electric shock from a sink when a central heating system was wrongly wired.

The electrician charged had connected the live pin in a central heating programmer to the earth in the junction box, which resulted in the radiators and pipework in the house being live. In another case, in which a teenager was electrocuted by a faulty power shower, it was not possible to trace the person responsible.

The evidence of negligence can sometimes take years to manifest itself and this can be a problem when it comes to providing evidence in the courts. But where a company or a person is clearly putting lives at risk, the Health and Safety Executive will make strenuous efforts to seek the offender.

"We might liaise with the local authority and the police and in the past have gone to great lengths to track people down," says Mark Wheeler of the HSE. "It is difficult to pursue when companies go out of business but individuals cannot change their status. The regulations covering electrical work are very specific. Where a professional job is being done, the home becomes the work place so that if a builder, say, is putting in a loft extension the house is in effect a construction site."

There is plenty of evidence that most people have great faith in the skill of others, especially in areas of which they themselves know little. But according to Clare Wessely's electrician, we should all be more cautious. "I have seen some terrible jobs. It is better to get it checked by someone else than live with doubts. It could have been much worse for the young French girl."



Far from purrfect, there is plenty of work for Duncan and Mariana in their rambling, Victorian house, which they didn't count on falling in love with

Photograph: Neville Elder

To make a killing put your life on hold

Renovating can add plenty of value to your property. But, as Fiona Brandhorst discovered, it means work, work and more work

"No pain, no gain" is little consolation if you're up to your neck in sweat and tears renovating a property. While some people manage to make vast fortunes on a house without so much as changing a light switch, others are more dedicated, spending months or even years restoring a house before cashing in on their investment. Buying a rambling, unmodernised Victorian semi "as Grandma left it" was something Duncan Bengie and Mariana Hardcastle vowed they'd never

do again, but Duncan is the first to admit that their second foray into the world of renovation was purely "motivated by money". They paid £134,000 for their house last summer just as the property market in south London was coming out of its nose-dive. Similar properties now cost around £250,000.

"We reckoned we needed to spend £60,000 on the renovations and we only had half of that," says Duncan. They agreed that most of the shortfall would be spent on labour so it made sense for Duncan to take a year's sabbatical from his business, sourcing antique furniture, to do as much of the work he could himself. Mariana, meanwhile, continued her job as an estate agent.

Having sold their flat quickly, they had to live apart with friends for four months while the electricity, plumbing, central heating and roof were renewed. Duncan worked around and sometimes with the professionals. "The plumber

was employed on a day rate," says Duncan. "I didn't want him to waste time going off to the builders' merchant for parts so he gave me the list instead. I figured if I was around working all the time, they'd have to do the same."

Duncan and Mariana lived in one room when they moved in together with the "demolition site" around them. They didn't bother with a plan of action, the task was too big. They'd even taken a gamble on not having a full structural survey, relying instead on the "unofficial" advice of an architect friend that there was "not a lot wrong" with the house.

Duncan started decorating at the top of the house and is slowly working his way down. It took him three weeks to install the new kitchen from a "stack of boxes and various plans" only to find the ceiling had succumbed to damp from the room above and fallen in one morning at 4am. "It's still down, I can't face it," he adds.

Is it easy to become obsessed

with the task when you've set yourself a timescale? "You have to be disciplined," explains Duncan. "You need to have time off but not too much or it's difficult to get the momentum going again."

Most of the decorations have been chosen with an eye to reselling the property, with a few exceptions. "The bedrooms have been painted in bold colours and the main bedroom will be furnished in a Thirties style as it's the period I specialise in. A gothic arch in the hallway will frame a gothic-style window I've found for the kitchen. But we've pondered to the need for Victorian features like fireplaces."

One thing Duncan and Mariana didn't budget for when they took on their financial proposition was falling in love with the house. "We probably won't be moving on as quickly as we'd intended," adds Duncan.

Moving on has never been a problem for Larry Griffiths, national sales manager for a gas

company, and his wife Hazel, whose first renovating challenge came when they sold their clone estate house in 1980 on the outskirts of Peterborough to buy a five-bedroom Victorian detached house.

The house had ancient wiring, no damp-proof course and a "nail sick" roof where the tiles were just sliding off like sheet rain. Eighteen months and several large tins of emulsion later, they moved on again, with a sizeable deposit, to a sprawling 1920s bungalow. Intact, with period features, including plaster swallows round the ceilings, it was so "unfashionable" at the time that it was practically given away.

Larry, 47, a former gas fitter, tackles most of the renovation work himself and when he can't, he always knows a man who can. Yet no one could rescue Larry and Hazel from the only bad property move they have made. Initially, they were delighted with the tiny terraced cottage that cost "peanuts".

However, it didn't take long to find that their bedroom window had a fine view of an abattoir. Three days a week the street was awash with blood. "The rats were the size of cats," remembers Larry. "Apparently it was all the protein going down the drains." They resold it, fully renovated, on a quiet day at the abattoir.

Larry and Hazel have spent the past three years restoring a Grade II-listed farmhouse. "The rules and regulations have nearly killed me," comments Larry, "all the work has had to be inspected, but I've learnt so much."

Making money is the motivation, but do personal relationships suffer as weekends are spent stripping and sanding? "You have to have the same vision," says Larry, "or you'd be walking down divorce street very quickly."

Duncan Bengie would use the profit he hopes to make to have an easier life. "Next time, we'll have the money to pay someone to do it for us."



PENNY JACKSON

Why sad hotels could spark a smile

This could be a good time to seek out those shabby, down-at-heel London streets where the odd person can often be found sitting disconsolately on the steps of a once-smart house.

Budget hotels in places like South Kensington and Paddington have always stood out like sore thumbs and it is quite possible to walk from a smart, pricey street round the corner into another of peeling paintwork and a generally sad air.

For the residents of Courtfield Gardens in South Kensington this could all be about to change. Planning consent has been given to turn five small hotels into 33 luxury flats and they are being sold by Blenheim Bishop and Winkworth for about £9m.

But what is of real interest is the effect it will have on nearby homes. Christopher Roupell of Winkworth says the impact will be considerable. "Until recently prices were depressed by the presence of budget hotels but residents within the garden square may see the value of their property rise by up to 10 per cent and those living on the same terrace by as much as 20 per cent."

The story is similar in the Paddington area, already undergoing development. Owners of hostels and hotels are being tempted into selling to developers who are making generous offers, knowing that they can still see a healthy return on their investment.

Even though investors from the Far East are thin on the ground these days, the expats are a pretty demanding group. But not all of them are returning to the UK flush with funds.

Colin Mackenzie of Hamptons International, who deals mostly with buyers' inquiries, says that while those in banking and financial services can now afford large houses and even small estates, the civil engineer is being forced to sell. "The gravy train has stopped for them. The construction industry has come to a halt and Hong Kong airport is finished so they are returning without jobs and often decide now is the time to sell and rent instead."

The third category is the perennial expat who might be off to Japan or Singapore who wants an idyllic country cottage that can be used as family bolthole and a holiday let.

The Surrey estate of Sir Archibald Hamilton, the Conservative MP, is for sale for the first time in more than 100 years. The Snowdenham Estate, near Bramley, has been in Archie Hamilton's family since 1874.

The main house is 17th century, and according to FPD Savills, the selling agents, it is rare for a classic house with hundreds of acres of land so close to London to come on to the market.

The asking price is in excess of £4.25m.

How to find your 'fairy castle'

The market is wising up to the fact that gays sometimes have different requirements when it comes to finding a property.

By Robert Liebman

Gay districts are out of the closet. Miller Homes is promoting a new development of flats and houses with a boast that it is located near Manchester's gay village and the city centre. A firm of independent financial advisers (IFA) in Oxford advertises in the gay press, highlighting the words "pride" and "prejudice" in pink.

Phil Carvosso, a London-based IFA, advertises his services with a photograph showing two bare-chested men with nothing between them but a rose. "We gays have special needs, life styles, fears and concerns," says Mr Carvosso, "and a financial adviser should be able to understand them." The list of fears is obviously topped by HIV and Aids - and insurers and lenders who pry into personal matters.

"Also, consider the uncertainty of gay relationships," Mr Carvosso suggests. "We have a habit of jumping ship fairly often. You need to have a portable solution to mortgage problems."

He suspects that most straight IFAs don't want to communicate with gays and wouldn't be able to do so if they tried. "With a gay broker, you can talk openly and mention risk factors on a sympathetic and understanding basis. My clients can be pierced or shaved, and they don't get the tongue-in-cheek attitude, as with a straight adviser."

Gay IFAs can also work financial wonders that are denied to their straight counterparts. Mr Carvosso did indeed get a better mortgage for David and Marco, who were renting an attic flat complete with roof garden in north London.

"We tried to buy the flat so that we could open it out and make it loft-like," says David. "The landlord refused to sell, so we decided to buy."

Location was one of several strict conditions, he explains: "It had to be near Islington, where Marco runs a flower shop. It had to have a lot of light, and not be a Victorian terrace, which we find uninteresting. It had to have a roof terrace; Marco's passion is plants."

They found a converted office block, made an offer, and were promptly gazzumped. "That was on a Saturday. We made the rounds of estate agents, picked up particulars, drove around on Sunday and viewed the buildings from the outside," says David, who is finance co-ordinator with Rubber Stuffers, a charity dedicated to HIV prevention.

Of the seven flats in the block, only one had the necessary condition of being attached to the roof. They made an immediate offer, and are hoping to complete a week after exchanging contracts.

A proud Mr Carvosso proclaims that "David and Marco found a queen's paradise. Everyone is looking for fairy castles, unusual properties. It's not that easy in London."

Gay communities are prominent in Brighton, Bath, Bristol and Manchester and, as gays know, in many other areas. "Obviously there are gay people everywhere," says Stephen Cootie, publisher of the *Gay to Z Directory*. He thinks that his section of London is gay, "but I'm not sure if that is because it is a gay area, or because I know a lot of gays."

Mr Cootie notes that "some letting agencies specialise in gay housing, and Switchboard, a voluntary organisation, provides safe flat-sharing. If someone is looking for or offering a flat share, Switchboard does discreet vetting before issuing details. Stonewall Housing Association also certainly considers security and discretion."

Gay men tend to regard London as too sprawling and diverse to allow any one particular area to be predominantly or recognisably gay. But gays clearly feel most at home in such areas as Brixton, Islington, Camden, Hampstead, Earl's Court, Soho and Richmond, and parts of Wimbledon, Stoke Newington and Rotherhithe.

If there is a trend, it seems to be less in "ghettoising" a specific location than in preferring certain types of housing, namely converted warehouses and offices. "The first problem is price. Rich gays go somewhere stylish, like a loft area," says Mr Cootie. "And many are rich simply because they have two incomes and no children."

Julia Shelley, director of Stonewall Housing Association, insists that "not all gays and lesbians are affluent with high disposable incomes, and we provide for gay homeless who don't have resources." She agrees that "one part of the property market that is successfully targeting the pink pound is warehouse conversions."

"The gay mentality," says Philip Carvosso, "is always looking for something different, something to create. The artistic flair leads us to these different properties."

Carvosso and Company, 0500 778860; Stonewall, 0171-359 5767; Gay to Z, 0171-793 7450; London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard, 0171-837 7324.



Room at the top: David and his partner were determined to find somewhere with a roof terrace, as Marco's passion is plants. Phil Carvosso helped them find the ideal flat. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

